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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

KAY BEAUCHAMP — THE ROOTS OF RACIALISM

R. BELLAMY — MONOPOLY CAPITAL — CRITICAL REVIEW OF A CONTEMPORARY STUDY

MICHAEL LONG — MARXISM AND CRITICISM — CONTRIBUTION TO A DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION:

ALAN ECCLESTONE — THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND MARXISM

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Marxism Today

Vol. 10 No. 11

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Editorial Comments

SELF deception is the mood amongst many Labour Party supporters who seem resolved to avoid consideration of the consequences of the Government's July measures.

A resolution aimed at the Special General Meeting of the National Union of Railwaymen on September 20th declared:

> "This Special General Meeting supports the economic policies of the Government, believing that the foundations are being laid to achieve a stable economy with a high standard of living and a greater measure of social justice for all our people.
>
> "We record our confidence in the ability of the Labour Government to promote the steady growth of the economy for the benefit of all."

There is no doubt that those who passed this resolution wanted desperately not to condemn the Government. They ought to know that the July measures have brought economic growth to a standstill and that this is quite incompatible "with a high standard of living and a greater measure of social justice for all".

The National Plan

The whole social policy of the Labour Party was based on the so-called National Plan, which projected an increase in productivity of 3.8 per cent. This would result in the gross National Product increasing between 1964 and 1970 by £8,210 million at constant prices. It was out of this increased production that increased investment, increased personal consumption and vastly improved social services were to be supported.

But productivity is not rising by 3.8 per cent per year. It rose by $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in 1965, and in 1966 will rise by less than 2 per cent. So it is highly probable that the gross National Product will rise by only £3,800 million (in constant prices) in the period of the plan.

In his speech to the National Productivity Conference Mr. Wilson declared that the Government would give priority to maintaining or increasing private investment.

If this was achieved, and if expenditure on the social services and social building were maintained, it would absorb over £3,000 million, leaving virtually nothing whatever for increased personal consumption, from now until 1970.

The Lower Paid

The Labour Party executive's resolution carried at Brighton mentions that when the freeze and the period of tight restraint are over increased wages will only be paid in cases of "genuine" productivity bargains, or to low-paid workers who have fallen badly out of line. The implications of this had better be faced. If the low-paid workers get a nominal increase of wages, unless the Government takes very special measures to ensure that it comes out of profits only, it could mean price rises.

The Government have the audacity to claim that the granting of a microscopical increase of wages to *some* lower paid is proof that they are concerned with social justice. Let us see. In the year 1965 the total wage and salaries bill increased by £1,220 million over the 1964 level. The 1966 freeze will probably reduce this year's increase to about £700 million. In 1967 when the total freeze is over only the lower-paid workers will be allowed to get wage increases unless the workers can force the abandonment of the whole policy. So instead of the wage and salaried workers getting an increase in the year 1967, to the same extent as they received in 1965 (namely £1,220 million) only a section of the workers classified as low paid will get an increase of say £150-£200 million. You can call this an "act of social justice" if you like but for the bulk of the workers it is an act of highway robbery. It is one thing to advance the lower-paid workers in a context where all workers are getting increased wages but the lower paid are getting larger rises than usual. It is quite another thing to freeze all wages and salary increases except for the very lowest-paid workers. Yet this latter is the policy.

MacDonald Whitewashed

No better example could be cited of the degeneracy of some of the present right wing Labour Leadership than their presence at a commemoration meeting of James Ramsay MacDonald, who betrayed the workers and the Labour Party in the midst of the world-wide economic crisis of 1929-33.

MacDonald who was described by H. G. Wells as "a vain empty simulacrum of a statesman" was pressurised by the City, the Tory and Liberal Parties to cut unemployed benefit, in order "to safeguard the pound". As usual the Labour Party executive acquiesced. The General Council of the TUC, under the powerful pressure of the organised

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unemployed, and fearing the development of communist influence in the unions, resisted. The Labour Cabinet was split down the middle. MacDonald went to Buckingham Palace to hand in the resignation of his government, and was invited to remain and head a National Government with a Tory-Liberal majority. He played the usual bluff about "facing realities in order to save the nation". In the subsequent General Election campaign he flourished a totally worthless German mark from the inflation period of the 1920s and told his audiences that if he had not acted as he did, the pound would have sank to that level.

A few years later right wing Labour leaders were declaring that such a catastrophe could never occur again because J. M. Keynes had brought about a revolution in economic thinking and they would know how to deal with the bankers the next time.

Alas, when the crises of 1964 and 1966 arose the Labour leadership submitted to banking pressure as ignominously as MacDonald. They imposed a credit squeeze in 1964 which halted expansion and a super credit squeeze and pay pause in 1966. Mr. Wilson was out to save the pound once again, not because it was likely to fall to the level of a German mark or anything else, but because if the pound was not saved, unemployment would rise to over two million. Right wing hypocrites all over the place held their hand to their heart and declared that they could not oppose Mr. Wilson and accept the awesome responsibility of helping to bring about two million unemployed. How this was to happen the elusive Mr. Wilson never really explained.

As usual, the Labour Party Executive (dominated by the very Ministers who had in the Cabinet and Government endorsed the cuts) supported the freeze, declaring that it was doing so in order to save the social services—a prophecy that may turn out to be one of the great lies of the period. The TUC General Council (sinking miserably below the level of their right wing colleagues of 1931) "reluctantly acquiesced" in the freeze. The union dissent from the standstill policy was, however, formidable.

One can understand the right wing attempt to rehabilitate MacDonald. For if MacDonald was a traitor, what are the present-day authors of the pay freeze?

Control of Steel

The Labour Party has already put the control of steel reorganisation in the hands of big business even before the industry is nationalised. Lord Melchett, the merchant banker, and two top names in the steel companies Mr. Niall McDiarmid and Mr. Stephen Gray, head the team. With the solitary exception of Mr. Ron Smith of the Union of Post Office Workers this is an all-business team. It should be recalled that the head of the nationalised industry in the 1950s, Mr. Hardy of British Oxygen, at least held "Socialist" opinions, with a small "s".

The steel workers will be under no illusion as to what kind of nationalisation this portends. Redundancy is already starting in the steel industry and, as is the custom, workers are expecting it to be mitigated on a "share the work" basis. Militants have hitherto supported this because it put an obstacle in the way of arbitrary dismissals and helped to preserve the workshop organisations.

But the Prime Minister is the relentless enemy of this "solution". He is embarking on a fierce campaign for inner factory efficiency. He wants managements to go over their factory and eliminate every protective practice and to revise all existing manning scales. He wants rationalisation to be carried through ruthlessly, for it accepts the estimate that more than half the existing labour force could be dispensed with.

The Government's whole justification for nationalisation is not that it would reduce the exploitation of the workers but that it would facilitate a type of modernisation in which a large number of workers would be eliminated.

The trade unions in this industry will need under nationalisation to develop much tougher policies than hitherto if they are to defend the workers. That policy needs to be developed now. The steel bill needs to be amended, as the first step in this necessary campaign.

Seminar on Africa

Some months ago *Marxism Today* decided to organise a one-day seminar of two sessions on problems of the African Revolution. This was held on Saturday, October 1st, at the NUFTO trade union hall, with about 70 present at the first session and 80 at the second. An interesting and welcome feature was the representative character of those present (British, Africans, Pakistanis, West Indians) and a good proportion of women.

The opening speeches from the platform and the lively discussion from the floor kept everything going all day with a swing. One day was not enough, and at the end there were still speakers from the floor who could not get in.

Platform speakers at the morning session were Thomas Hodgkin (former director of Ghana Institute of African Affairs), Joe Matthews (South African National Congress) and Jack Woddis, well-known for his trilogy of books on Africa.

Keen interest was aroused from the beginning when Thomas Hodgkin started with a thought-provoking review of the big changes during the 1950s and 1960s. Drawing attention to his early books on Africa, he expressed the self-critical view

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that he had been too optimistic about the possible results of political independence, and expected too much from the mass parties which grew out of the struggle to achieve this.

Joe Matthews underlined the relation between the struggle in Africa and the changed relations of forces on a world scale with the big advance towards socialism. The existence of the socialist world was now a powerful factor and stimulant for the liberation struggle all over the world. But only to the extent that the working class advanced to the leadership of the African Revolution could the achievement of its final aims be guaranteed.

Jack Woddis's main theme was to analyse closely the forces of revolution in Africa. Listeners were reminded of Lenin's analysis of classes in former Tsarist Russia, of what gave rise to rival classes, and what constitutes a class. Though classes were still in the process of formation in Africa (with the peasantry constituting the vast majority) the working class was growing rapidly. Because of its role in the process of production, its experience of past struggles, and its more homogenous and disciplined character, it would inevitably become the leading class force to ensure the advance of the African Revolution.

After a brief interval for direct questions and answers there followed a ding-dong discussion which could not be stopped until long after the time for the lunch interval. Most taking part had obviously made a close study of developments in Africa. There was certainly a variety of political trends, for and against the views put from the platform.

The three platform speakers had only a few minutes each to reply to the whole discussion. On some aspects (as for instance whether the working class was the leading force) there were sharply different points of view. But, however different the approach, the discussion was constructive throughout.

Africa's Future

Subject for the afternoon session was "Africa's Future: Capitalism or Socialism?", for which there were also three platform speakers. The first was Ken Post, who lectured for four years at the Ibadan University in Nigeria, and is now at the Manchester University.

Nelson Samkange (representative in Britain of the Zimbabwe African People's Union) who spoke next did not confine himself to the struggle being waged in Rhodesia for majority rule and the defeat of the white minority dictatorship. This was the first stage in Rhodesia, he emphasised. When political independence was achieved then the prospect would open up of advancing on the road to socialism—and he himself was convinced this was the road to travel.

Idris Cox was the last platform speaker and dealt with two main themes (a) the kind of socialist concepts existing in Africa, and (b) an examination of how far Marxist ideas are applicable to African conditions. In this respect the concepts "African Socialism" and "Arab Socialism" came under fire and the speaker emphasised that because Marxism was *scientific* socialism it was applicable to any part of the world. It was indeed the very essence of Marxism to learn from experience and to study various stages of historical development. The principles of socialism were universal but its form would differ in many countries, as well as the methods of achieving this aim.

If anything, the discussion was even livelier in the afternoon session, with even more taking part, and a number at the end who could not be fitted in. Much of it was centred on the argument as to whether Africans did really have the choice between a capitalist or socialist future.

This has arisen because Ken Post had insisted earlier that all independent African states (even the most advanced) were still in the capitalist world sector, and to embark on the socialist road would involve a sharp break with existing policy. In answer to this it was recognised that these states were still mainly capitalist, and it was not a matter of choosing socialism (impossible at the present stage) but of choosing a *path* towards socialism.

There was also a trend that gave the impression that the main factor which could transform Africa's backward economies and help them to break with capitalism was massive socialist economic aid. This was countered by pointing out that the revolutionary forces in any particular country must make their own revolution. Revolution could not be imported. Socialist economic aid could be a contributing factor but not a substitute for internal changes—and in any case, was not available on a scale that could solve all the economic problems of the new African states.

The Editor of *Marxism Today*, in the chair, promised that similar seminars could be organised in the future, asked for suggestions for the subjects and character of such seminars, and suggested that the discussion on "Africa's Future" should be continued within the journal.

Radical Student Alliance

October saw the birth of a new kind of student grouping, the Radical Student Alliance. Launched by six student union presidents and two leading members from the executives of the three student political organisations, National Association of Labour Student Organisations, Communist Party

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National Student Committee, and the Union of Liberal Students, this group breaks through the establishment induced barrier between student unions dealing with purely student problems and the political organisations engaged in sterile debate.

At a press conference the group issued a ten-point manifesto calling for (1) autonomy for student unions; (2) student participation in all college government; (3) full maintenance for everyone in full-time education above school leaving age; (4) comprehensive education and higher salaries for teachers; (5) more democratic college authorities including TU representatives; (6) student action on wider social problems; (7) solidarity with oppressed students abroad; (8) greater militancy in pursuit of student aims; (9) greater membership participation in national student unions, and (10) co-operation with trade unions and professional associations.

The Works of Marx and Engels

Volume 39 of the new second edition of the works of Marx and Engels, in Russian, has just been published in Moscow, completing an enterprise begun in 1955. The collection is far fuller than has ever been made before, containing 5,500 items, compared with about 4,500 in the first edition thirty years ago: in particular, it contains over 400 new articles and more than 600 new letters, many of them never printed anywhere else. It is not yet an absolutely complete or "academic" edition, and a number of early writings and other papers are reserved for supplementary volumes. Some articles, speeches, first drafts (for example, of *The Civil War in France*) have appeared only in rare Russian publications of the old Marx-Engels Institute.

Quite a number of letters from relatives and friends, which throw light on the work, ideas or personal biographies of Marx and Engels, are included. A tremendous job has been done on preparing adequate explanatory notes—an average of 400 to each volume: and the same applies to the identification of the vast number of quotations used by the two great thinkers, often from classical prose or poetry in a variety of European languages (sometimes even proverbs in the Rhineland dialect). The *Bulletin* (No. 14) of the Marx's and Engels' Works Section of the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism, from which these details have been taken, gives a list of 103 members of the Institute's research and editorial staff, and another 6 of its technical workers, who have carried out this herculean task over these eleven years.

A good deal of the new material, and of course a vast proportion of the old—still not available to the English-speaking reader—deals with British politics and the British working class. The *Bulletin* mentions newly-discovered articles by Engels in the Chartist *Northern Star* and the democratic French *Réforme* (1846-8), articles by Marx and Engels in the German language *Brusseler-Zeitung* during the revolutions of 1848-9, new articles by both from the *New York Daily Tribune* and the *Neue Oder-Zeitung* (1853-1862), a mass of material in connection with the First International (1864-1872), and much else. The excellent subject-index to the volumes (27-39) in which the letters of Marx and Engels appear, which has been included in volume 39, is of the greatest importance in this respect. This truly great contribution by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism to the knowledge of Marx's and Engels' thought on basic problems which are still with us ought to be made available to the working-class movement of the English-speaking world as soon as possible.

H.G. at a Hundred

The best-known Marxist assessments of H. G. Wells—Lenin's and Caudwell's—were both, and understandably, unsympathetic. Wells had gone to the Kremlin in 1920 to argue that "through a vast sustained educational campaign the existing Capitalist system could be *civilised* into a Collectivist world system" and he had, as he himself confessed, a very uphill argument. Lenin appreciated the honesty of Wells's report on current conditions in Russia; but his general opinion of him could scarcely have been favourable. Caudwell's essay in *Studies in a Dying Culture* is a brilliant analysis of the petty bourgeois limitations of Wells's consciousness. Starting from Engels's definition of the Utopian Caudwell pours relentless scorn on Wells's "strange and in a way pathetic illusion" that "by forsaking art, science and action for 'propaganda' he can change the world".

Lenin and Caudwell were combatting a living force and an unpredictable and often infuriating one. Today, and not just for the sentimental occasion of a centenary, we are bound to see the remarkable career rather differently and more tolerantly. Of course, he was a petty-bourgeois philistine and the ruthless exposure of the limitations of his ideology cannot be gainsaid; yet Caudwell's conclusion that "of all contemporaries who have interested themselves in social change and seen the anarchy of current social relations, he is least a Socialist and farthest from Marxism" is not an acceptable last word. Wells was never a Marxist or anything like one; and he helped confuse a great many people. But his services to Socialism were not trivial and there are thousands of socialists and indeed Marxists today for whom his books were a potent and liberating influence. It is interesting, incidentally, to notice that a recently translated Soviet work—

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The Life and Thought of H. G. Wells by J. Kagarlitski (published by Sidgwick & Jackson) is a warmly sympathetic though critical study.

Among the many reasons for treating Wells with respect is his utter rejection of the passive or neutral role of the intellectual. He was not always wise in his judgments, even if his mistakes themselves were sometimes fruitful; but he was immensely courageous and—for all his ultimate discouragement and pessimism—irrepressible. His enthusiasm for science, his refusal to be impressed by the Establishment and its sacred cows, his Republicanism, his fervent belief in men's capacity to control nature and plan a better and more humane society, these are qualities which too few British intellectuals of our century have shared. In this year of his centenary we pay our fraternal tribute.

From Camelot to Waste Land

A new collection of literary essays by A. L. Morton, author of *A People's History of England*, has just been published by Lawrence and Wishart, entitled *The Matter of Britain* (35s.). Morton shows the connection of literature with its social background in a series of studies beginning with the Legend of King Arthur and finishing with T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. On the way he treats of Shakespeare, the Leveller Pamphlets, William Blake, the Brontës, the Christian Socialists, and John Ruskin.

The somewhat enigmatic title refers to King Arthur, since the legend of Camelot and of the Knights of the Round Table used to be known as "the Matter of Greece". Morton deals with "the Matter of Britain" since King Arthur, as the movement of the break-up of feudal society, and then the rise and decay of capitalism, was reflected in English literature.

By the way, *A People's History of England* is now available as a paperback at 15s., published jointly by Lawrence and Wishart and Seven Seas Books. These publishers hope to co-operate in further paperbacks, including a volume of William Morris.

The Defence Accuses

In a few weeks Lawrence and Wishart are publishing *The Defence Accuses*, the third and last part of D. N. Pritt's autobiography.

When the first part, *From Right to Left*, was published the Press responded with reviews under various headings, ranging from "Writing in a Temper" (*Sunday Times*), "Man to whom Compromise was anathema" (*Northern Despatch*), and "Die-hard of the Left" (*Observer*), to "An Advocate for Socialism" (*Daily Worker*), while *The Times Literary Supplement* remarked: "This man remains monolithically and exasperatingly consistent".

The completed Autobiography has a marvellous story to tell of a man who began as a Conservative and, when already well-established in his legal career, then devoted all his talents and energies to the cause of democracy, peace and socialism, and to the defence of the persecuted and oppressed. In this Pritt remained, and remains, "monolithically consistent", and no doubt "exasperatingly" so to those who disapprove of such activities.

As for "writing in a temper", it is true that Pritt never had much patience with reactionaries. This is nowhere shown more convincingly than in his account, in the first part of the autobiography, of his brush with a learned judge who was trying a case in Gibraltar, during the Spanish War, which concerned the Spanish Republic. "It is customary, Mr. Pritt, to rise in order to show respect for the Court." "That, my Lord, is why I remain seated."

The second part, *Brasshats and Bureaucrats*, dealt with Pritt's work as an independent MP during the war and under the first post-war Labour Government, and it includes accounts of how he defended soldiers persecuted by the brasshats including the case of the Cairo Parliament. The third part is in many ways the most exciting of all, for it deals mainly with Pritt's defence of national liberation leaders since 1951. The most famous of these was the case of Jomo Kenyatta.

Now it is complete, this autobiography offers a most valuable document of contemporary history, and the record of the work of one of the most remarkable men of our times.

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The Roots of Racialism

Kay Beauchamp

IN my article, published in June, on *Race and Human Society*, four things emerged. Firstly, the differences between races or racial groups concern superficial and unimportant qualities. Secondly, the different racial groups have in common all the essential qualities of human beings as distinct from the rest of the animal world. Thirdly, differences within a racial group are greater than differences between groups. Fourthly, whatever the social effects of marriages between members of different groups biologically there are no harmful effects.

I ended my article with the question which I shall try to answer this time. Why should these minor differences between different groups of the human family lead to conflict and death, instead of simply adding interest to life and enriching it?

What is Racialism?

Robert Gardiner, a Ghanaian, who holds an important post in the United Nations, dealt with the whole question of relations between races in the Reith Lectures last year.[1]

He calls racism a doctrine, "according to which a man's worth was determined by the race to which he belonged". He said that this doctrine began at the end of the nineteenth century. I would date it earlier by some 400 years. However, I would certainly agree with him that racism or racialism has become and is becoming more and more violent and destructive in many parts of the world.

No-one today would dispute the fact that there are oppressed races and nationalities. In the vast majority of cases it is the non-White people, whether Asian, African or American who are oppressed and members of the white race or racial group who benefit from this oppression. However, the question of colour is not the key to racialism and the people who have come nearest to being exterminated as well as being persecuted are the Jewish peoples.

In *Africa, Roots of Revolt* Jack Woddis wrote, "the root and fruit of racialism is profit". It is the differences though relatively minor between different racial groups and nationalities that provide the basis for racial prejudice, but the driving force for it, is the desire of a particular group, class or section of a class to maintain a privileged position, to retain economic or other advantages.

This is usually achieved by making a particular people a scapegoat, so that all the ills of society can be blamed on them, and the real causes obscured. This renders them weak and defenceless so that they can be exploited more intensely. In addition, the exploiting class is able to divide and weaken all the exploited and thus gain greater profit.

When did Racialism Arise?

It is tempting to try to trace the different forms of prejudice and relate this to the main stages of human society. Anything approaching this would be outside the scope of the present article. However, Juan Comas attempts something of this kind in his article on *Racial Myths*.[2]

Although he does not directly relate his observations to the different stages of human society, he gives examples of prejudice at widely different times in history.

Racial discrimination against Negroes appears to have occurred as early as 1860 B.C. An order issued by the Pharaoh in Egypt read:

> "No Negro shall cross this boundary by water or by land, by ship or with his flocks, save for the purpose of trade or to make purchases in some post."

Two thousand years ago the Greeks regarded other people as barbarians, and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), declared that certain people are "by nature free and others slaves".

The Roman, Cicero, declared "Men differ in knowledge but all are equal in ability to learn; there is no race, which guided by reason, cannot obtain virtue", but contradicted this by describing our ancestors in Britain, as "stupid and unteachable".

Professor Comas, however, sees a basic difference between earlier prejudices and the racial prejudice which developed towards the end of the fifteenth century, with the beginning of African colonisation, the discovery of America and the Trans-Pacific route to India:

> "All this notwithstanding, it may be asserted that generally speaking there was no true racial prejudice before the fifteenth century, since before then the division of mankind was not so much into antagonistic races as into 'Christians and infidels'—a much more humane differentiation, since the chasm between religions can be bridged while the biological racial barrier is impassable."[3]

[1] These lectures have now been published under the title *World of Peoples*, Robert Gardiner, B.B.C., 15s.

[2] *Racial Myths* by Juan Comas, Professor at the Mexican School of Anthropology, published in *The Race Question in Modern Science*, UNESCO, 20s., p. 11.

[3] ibid., p. 13.

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Racial Prejudice and Capitalism

The rapid growth of racial prejudice at the end of the fifteenth century, coincided with the development of merchant capitalism, which paved the way for industrial capitalism in Western Europe. Karl Marx described the process by which the growing capitalist class acquired the capital to develop industry. He called this process Primitive Accumulation.

Describing this in detail in *Capital*, Volume 1, chapter 31, he wrote:

> "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. On their heels treads the commercial war of the European nations, with the globe for a theatre."[4]

The industrial development, which the riches stolen from Africa, Asia and America had done so much to render possible, gave the European, the White man, the superior weapons and techniques, with which he was able to subdue the rest of the world. These enabled him to conquer and enslave other peoples and to force them to produce the precious metals, the minerals and the agricultural products needed to feed the industry of Western Europe.

To jpstify his plunder, the White man quickly developed the theory of racial superiority. As early as 1550 Juan Gines de Sepulveda was speaking of the American Indians as "irrational beings—as different from Spaniards, as cruelty is from kindness and monkeys are from men" very much in the same way as so many Whites in Rhodesia and South Africa speak of Africans today.

The Slave Trade

Many writers have described the appalling nature of the slave trade by which millions of Africans were stolen from their homelands and transported across the Atlantic, many of them to die on the way. In the words of the great American Negro leader, Dr. Du Bois:

> "Whole regions were depopulated, whole tribes disappeared. It was the rape of a continent, seldom if ever paralleled in ancient or modern history."

The idea that the Negroes are inferior to White people was not in any way the cause of the slave trade but rather the result of it. Basil Davidson has shown how, less than a century earlier, European travellers had been favourably impressed by the wealth and cultural level of the African countries. Dr. Eric Williams, West Indian author, and now Prime Minister of Trinidad, shows that this change had an economic basis:

> "Slavery in the Caribbean has been too narrowly identified with the Negro. A racial twist has thereby been given to what was basically an economic phenomenon. Slavery was not born of racism; rather racism was the consequence of slavery."[5]

He shows that the first unfree labourers of the New World were Indians and White people. The number of White servants, criminals and destitute peoples, who were seized in or near the ports in Britain, and shipped to the New World as indentured servants, amounted to nearly one-quarter of a million. It was because Negro slaves proved to have more "endurance, docility and labour capacity" that the slave trade became more and more confined to them. In fact, he concludes, the slave trade became a trade in Negroes for one reason only—the colonies needed labour and resorted to Negro labour because it was cheapest and best.

When after the abolition of slavery it became no longer possible for the owners to get Negro labour on the plantations they turned to Indian indentured labour.

Race comes into all this only as a cloak and attempted moral justification for ruthless exploitation.

Most of the slavers and plantation owners regarded themselves as moral, upright men. They were practising Christians and heard the New Testament read every Sunday. However, they quickly (to what degree consciously or unconsciously, is of little significance) developed a doctrine to overcome any qualms of conscience and to invoke Providence to bless their actions.

John Newton,[6] who later became an Abolitionist, explained that while he was the captain of a slave ship his main concern was to see that the ships were filled, otherwise the profit was cut down. He never had a single scruple about the correctness of what he was doing. He added "Nor was such a thought once suggested to me by any friend. What I did I did ignorantly, considering it in the line of life which Providence had allotted me . . .".

The American Communist leader William Z. Foster[7] describes how the slave trade was justified

[4] *Capital*, Vol. I, Allen & Unwin edition, page 755.

[5] *Capitalism and Slavery*, Dr. Eric Williams, p. 7.

[6] *The Journal of a Slave Trader* 1750-4. John Newton, p. 99.

[7] *The Negro Problem in American History*, William Z. Foster, p. 462.

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in the early days on the grounds that the victims were lost souls and heathens but the idea of racial inferiority was later introduced and Negroes came to be regarded as not really human beings:

> "The assumption that the Negro is inferior on biological grounds was soon turned into Gospel truth in the propaganda of capitalist elements financially interested in forcing the Negroes into a position of social inferiority so that they could be more effectively exploited."

Pseudo-Science

In the nineteenth century a whole series of books were published to prove the inequality of races and the inferiority of the Negro race, in particular. There was a great flowering of pseudo-scientific racialism. The Count de Gobineau's essay on the inequality of the human race had very great influence. Even Darwin's *Origin of Species*, published in 1859, was seized on by the racialists to "prove" that human races are so different from one another as to constitute different species.

By many writers, race was regarded as the most important factor in human history. Race was often identified with language. God was held to have created each race separately and to have endowed each with a separate language. Race was confused with culture and a more developed culture was taken as proof of a superior race.

In a most interesting chapter on "The Racists and their Opponents", Philip D. Curtin[8] traces the extraordinary ideas which developed between 1830 and 1860 and laid the basis for racial docrines that were "to dominate Western thought about non-Western peoples for half a century and more".

Anthropology, phrenology and anatomy were called on to show the inferiority of certain races. Phrenologists claimed that African skulls showed a higher stage of development than those of American Indians or Australian aborigines but lower than those of Europeans.

A physician and professor of anatomy in Philadelphia, Samuel George Morton, collected and measured skulls. He filled these with white pepper seeds and then measured the volume of the seeds. He published his findings under important sounding Latin titles to show that the Caucasian skull had a mean capacity of 87 cubic inches and the Negro skull only 78 cubic inches.

Both his statistics (he used much too small a sample) and his claim that the size of the skull has any relation to intellect have since been shown to be false but the peppercorn "theory" was enormously influential at the time and was widely quoted in America and among scientists in this country.

Those who maintained that human beings all belong to one species, used as proof the fact that all human races can breed together and produce fertile offspring. The racists were not to be outdone by this. Robert Knox[9] maintained that Mulattoes might be fertile for a generation or so but after that, one or other of the original "pure" races would predominate since a crossbreed could not survive in competition with "pure" races. This was of course in flat contradiction to the experience of centuries in the West Indies and elsewhere but it was put forward as a "scientific truth" and widely believed.

These ideas were strongly opposed by those who were working for the abolition of slavery. The progressive ideas generated by the American and French revolution led to the questioning of the whole conception of slavery and the doctrine of the inferiority of some races. The institution of slavery did not fit in with the needs of capitalism for free labour.

However, as the struggle for the abolition of slavery grew on the one hand, so, on the other, the reactionaries developed still further their doctrines of the inequality and inferiority of the Negro people.

Divide and Rule

After the emancipation of the Negroes in the U.S.A., just over one hundred years ago, racialist ideas, combined with the use of force and intimidation were used to deprive the Negroes of rights they had won. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century many united struggles of Negro and White workers took place but the employers succeeded in breaking the unity:

> "The cotton planters acted upon the time-tested principle of exploiting classes—to divide and rule. They set out to liquidate the coalition between the freed man and the poor Whites, by cajoling or forcing the Negroes out of it. While instigating a terrorist campaign against the Negroes all over the south, at the same time they started a systematic campaign of soft-soaping them."[10]

As monopoly capitalism developed and the United States entered the stage of imperialism their conditions were worsened.

The struggle has continued throughout the whole of the present century and has reached new heights since the Second World War. There is a tremendous ferment of ideas among the Negro people and a whole number of organisations have developed to aid the struggle against racial prejudice and discrimination.

Yet after a struggle of three and a half centuries against chattel slavery, capitalist exploitation, social ostracism and lynch terror, Negroes in the U.S.A. are still oppressed.

[8] *The Image of Africa*. Philip D. Curtin. Macmillan, 50s., 1965.

[9] *The Races of Man*. Robert Knox, London 1850.

[10] W. Z. Foster, op. cit., p. 325.

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In the Southern States, they are still deprived of the vote and are humiliated in every possible way. In the northern cities they are segregated into certain parts of the towns, which become all-Black areas, while White families are forced by the property owners to move out, even if they do not want to do so, so that higher rents can be charged to Negroes. This leads to a position in which Negroes receive inferior education and inferior social services, such as exist in the U.S.A. and are caught in a net from which it is almost impossible to escape.

Unemployment among Negro adults and among Negro school-leavers in the Northern cities is just about twice as high as that among White adults and White school-leavers. Unemployment, poverty and segregation are the root causes of the Negro riots in Chicago and other cities.

Super-Profit

The oppression of the Negroes has brought enormous extra profits to American capitalism. Victor Perlo, the American Marxist economist estimates that a total of super-profits of about four billion dollars is filched yearly from the Negroes because they are paid lower wages for the work they do. This is an under-estimation of the profit derived from Negro oppression and does not include such big items as the low pay of Negro women domestics and the depressed conditions of White share croppers in the South, all of which are tied to the super-exploitation of the Negro workers. Major beneficiaries, he says, are U.S. Steel, General Motors, Morgan, du Pont, and other U.S. monopolies.

The reasons for this extra exploitation of the Negro people are deeply rooted in American history and the whole nature of American capitalism. The idea of Negro inferiority grew up out of the fact of Negro slavery and to justify it. Today racialist ideas assist the American ruling class to divide the working class and help them to maintain the capitalist system and to get super-profit out of the Negroes.

Capitalist society breeds racialism and in the period of its crisis and decay racialist attitudes are intensified. At the same time, developments throughout the world, the growth and progress of the socialist countries, the tremendous upsurge of the national liberation movement that has swept through Asia, Africa and Latin America, strengthen and re-inforce the movement for Negro rights in the U.S.A. and bring it allies all over the world.

Colour prejudice can never be completely overcome as long as capitalism lasts but significant victories in the struggle against it can be won.

Anti-Semitism played a role in Nazi Germany that is similar to that played by colour prejudice in the U.S.A. but with certain differences.

Fascism was defined by the Seventh Plenum of the Communist International as "the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialistic elements of finance capital".

At the Seventh World Congress, George Dimitrov declared that the most reactionary type of Fascism was the German type.[11]

> "It is the organisation of terrorist vengeance against the working class and the revolutionary section of the peasantry and intelligentsia. In foreign affairs, Fascism is jingoism in its crudest form, fomenting bestial hatred of other nations."

Fascism came to power when capitalism was unable to rule in the old way but the working class was not able to carry through a successful revolution. R. Palme Dutt[12] showed that the seeds of Hitler's victory were sown in the strangling of the 1918 revolution by Social Democracy and that within the Weimar Republic, step by step, the basis for Fascism, was laid.

Social processes are never simple and the monopoly capitalists do not necessarily put themselves individually at the head of the state. Instead they often find a figurehead and an organisation that is able to rule on their behalf. Such an individual and his organisation must be able to gain a mass basis among the people. In Germany, the National Socialists, the Nazis, served that purpose.

In order to build a mass basis, the Fascists used force, special bands of armed men, combined with demagogy.

Fascism and Anti-Semitism

R. Palme Dutt[13] described Fascist propaganda as demagogy carried to its most extreme point of development:

> "Demagogy is the art of playing on the hopes and the fears, the emotions and the ignorance of the poor and suffering for the *benefit of the rich and powerful.* It is the meanest of the arts. This is the art of Fascism."

Hitler used Anti-Semitism as his main means of playing on the hopes and fears of poor people for the benefit of the rich and powerful and, at the same time, enriched the latter still further by handing them the property confiscated from the Jewish people.

However, Anti-Semitism is not necessarily a characteristic of Fascism. In Spain, Franco could not have made much of Anti-Semitism since most of the Jews had been expelled by the Inquisition in the fifteenth century. Neither could he use colour

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[11] *United Front*, G. Dimitrov, Lawrence & Wishart, 1935.

[12] *Fascism and Social Revolution.* Lawrence & Wishart, 1934, p. 108.

[13] Op cit., p. 188.

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prejudice, as he brought in the Moorish troops from North Africa to fight the Republicans.

In Italy, Jewish people did not play a prominent part in intellectual and commercial life and there was no tradition of Anti-Semitism, although Mussolini introduced laws against the Jewish people to please Hitler in 1938.

Hitler borrowed Anti-Semitism as he did all his ideas from earlier writers and developed a hatred of the Jews when living in a doss house in Vienna. He seized on Anti-Semitism as the explanation of why he himself was poor and his talents were unrecognised. The Jews were the scapegoats on which he could lay the blame for all his misfortunes.

In adopting Anti-Semitism as one of the main weapons of demagogy, the Nazis could draw on deeply rooted prejudice. In many parts of Europe the Jewish people had for centuries been the "universal scapegoat". They were persecuted in the Middle Ages because they could be picked out as having a different culture and religion. As merchants, traders and moneylenders, they did not fit into the feudal pattern. While, on the one hand, they were persecuted, they were also courted by princes and kings who needed funds. The ideological justification used at this period was mainly religious.

With the development of capitalism, the prejudice against the Jews, taken over from feudal times, still persisted but had little popular support. The ideology of the rising bourgeoisie was generally democratic and humanitarian.

Weapon against Socialism

However, in the second half of the nineteenth century, Anti-Semitic ideas received a new impetus from various sources. One of these was from Bismarck, German Chancellor, who found that Anti-Semitism was a useful weapon against the Liberal and Socialist Parties, some of whose leaders were Jewish. The German Government continued to use Anti-Semitism against the developing progressive and working-class movements.[14]

As the class struggle grew in Germany, Anti-Semitism grew in intensity. On the one hand, the Jew was attacked as a Socialist and it was claimed that Jewish Socialism was threatening Christian civilisation. On the other hand, since there were some wealthy Jews, it was alleged that all the big financiers were Jewish and the wrath of the poor and penniless was stirred up against them.

Anti-Semitism was not confined to Germany but was provoked wherever there were a substantial number of Jewish people and the class struggle was particularly fierce. In Tzarist Russia and Poland Anti-Semitic propaganda was consistently used and the police instigated pogroms against the Jews as a means of dividing the working class and causing a diversion from the class struggle.[15] Thus Hitler and the Nazis found strong currents of Anti-Semitism which they were able to stir up and intensify.

Just as Hitler did not invent the doctrine of Anti-Semitism, neither did he conceive the doctrine of the myth of the "Aryan" race. This doctrine had first been developed two centuries earlier, but it was the Count de Gobineau, in the nineteenth century, who proclaimed the superiority of the "Aryan Race" over all other White strains. This doctrine was taken still further after the Franco-German war. Having been given a nationalist twist it was used to prove the superiority of the Germans (or so-called Aryan, Nordic or Teutonic race) over the Latins "who are a degenerate population group".

Hitler and the Nazis took all the most fantastic myths about Aryanism and a pure Nordic race in order to clothe his aggression against other nations and peoples in a mystical language. But Leon Poliakov[16] pointed out:

> "The mysteries of the racial soul, blood and Volk, would remain vague and indefinite abstractions so long as they were not made tangible to the faithful by opposing them to an anti-race, an existing and clearly embodied anti-people."

For the Nazis, Anti-Semitism and the myth of the Aryan super-race were two sides of one picture. The aim was power and domination but this was dressed up as a doctrine of Race—on the one hand they depicted the splendid Aryan Race whom Providence had destined to rule the world for a thousand years through the instrument of the Third Reich and on the other hand the Semites whom it was their Christian duty to destroy. The former Nazi leader, Herman Rauschning, declared:

> "If the Jew did not exist we should have had to invent him."

Because of the extreme intensity of the class struggle no half-measures were possible. The Fascists set out to fan hatred of the Jews as part of the means by which they divided and weakened the working class and provide a scapegoat against whom the anger of the people could be directed.

The demagogic use of racial hatred had a momentum of its own. Dispossession of the Jews of their property enriched the German capitalist class but this was not the main motive. In order to maintain the dictatorship, the Nazis had continuously to

[14] This is described in detail by Michael Leiris. *Race and Culture* in *The Race Question and Modern Science*. UNESCO.

[15] In Poland some Jewish people used to go to stay with Christians on May Day because that was a day on which diversionary attacks against them were most often incited.

[16] *Harvest of Hate*. Leon Poliakov.

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increase the amount of hysteria and the frenzy of hate which they evoked. The concentration camps were turned into death camps. The aim was set of the "Final Solution of the Jewish question" by total extermination. This was very nearly achieved by the murder of six million Jews.

Apartheid in South Africa

Just as colour prejudice under one set of conditions in the U.S.A. and Anti-Semitism under another in Germany, aided the ruling class to maintain their power and increase the exploitation of the working people, so has Apartheid in South Africa.

Because of the special conditions in South Africa, racialism, while its essential content is the same, took on a rather different form from what it did in the other two countries.

The Programme of the South African Communist Party adopted in 1962 speaks of South Africa as an example of colonialism of a special type and sums up in these words:

> "South Africa is not a colony but an independent state. Yet masses of our people enjoy neither independence nor freedom. The conceding of independence to South Africa by Britain in 1910 was not a victory over the forces of colonialism and imperialism. It was designed in the interests of imperialism. Power was transferred not into the hands of the masses of people of South Africa, but into the hands of the White minority alone. The evils of colonialism, in so far as the Non-White majority is concerned, were perpetuated and reinforced. A new type of colonialism was developed, in which the oppressing White national occupied the same territory as the oppressed people themselves and lived side by side with them."[17]

The Programme goes on to show that there are two South Africas, on the one hand that of White South Africa, contains all the features of an advanced capitalist state in its final stage of imperialism.

However, on another level, that of non-White South Africa there are all the features of a colony. The indigenous population is subjected to extreme national oppression, poverty, and exploitation, and is deprived of all democratic rights. The reliance by the state on brute force and terror and an artificial preservation of the most backward tribal institutions are both typical of imperialist rule.

Non-White South Africa is the colony of White South Africa itself. Further the Programme shows that the monopolists are the real power in South Africa and that they act as the agents of foreign imperialist interests.

American companies in South Africa earn a higher rate of profit than anywhere in the world, amounting, on an average, to 26 per cent in 1963, with one company reporting 100 per cent return.[18]

These monopolists make considerable concessions to the White workers and treat them as "an aristocracy of labour", paying them wages which are, on an average, about 15 times as high as those of African workers. They are given the skilled jobs and the positions of authority over non-Whites. The relatively high standards of living of White workers represent, says the Programme, "in reality a share in the super profits, made by the capitalists out of the gross exploitation of the non-Whites".

However, the Programme also shows that the monopolists exploit both White as well as non-White workers, and that some of the Whites earn little more than the Africans. The concessions given to the White workers are in order to prevent unity between Black and White and render both powerless to oppose the power of the monopolists.

While in the U.S.A., the Negroes are in a minority, in South Africa, Negroes, Asians and Coloured, outnumber the Whites by more than four to one. In round figures, out of 16 million people in South Africa, 11 million are Black, 1½ million Coloured, ½ million Asian, and about 3 million White. However, only the Whites are allowed to vote, to stand for Parliament, to live in certain areas or to take up certain occupations. The other four-fifths are forced to carry passes, live in segregated areas, to receive education only for menial tasks, and to obey the White man without question.

In order to maintain their domination and the super-profits which this makes possible the whole doctrine of White superiority and non-White inferiority and primitiveness has been developed and elaborated into the doctrine of Apartheid. This is claimed simply to mean "separate development" so that the different races can create conditions most suited to the qualities which Providence has ordained should be theirs. It is claimed that non-White people are not capable of benefiting from European civilisation.

"Separate development" is a myth invented to cover up the exploitation of the non-White people. White South Africans are completely dependent on the non-Whites. They enter into an intimate relationship with them by entrusting the care of their children, the preparation of their food and the washing of their clothes, to them. More and more non-Whites are being drawn into industries owned by Whites. Apartheid simply means discrimination, which enables the gap between the standard of living of the White and the non-White people to be widened.

[17] *The Road to South African Freedom*, published by Ellis Bowles, 52 Palmerston Road, London, S.E.14.

[18] *The African Communist*, No. 23, Fourth Quarter, 1965.

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Borrowed from Hitler

Just as Hitler borrowed the doctrines from earlier writers so South African racialists borrowed from Hitler Fascism. Brian Bunting[19] writes:

> "During the thirties many Nationalist Party leaders and wide sections of the Afrikaner people came strongly under the influence of the Nazi movement . . . most prominent victim of the Nazi philosophy was General Hertzog himself . . . he was convinced that a New World Order was on the way . . . he regarded National Socialism as suited to the moral and religious outlook of the Afrikaner . . . Hitler's equation of National Socialism with Christian Nationalism did not go unnoticed by his admirers, least of all by those in the ranks of the Nationalist Party."

Today, all the false ideas and dogmas which the Nationalist Party and the Verwoerd's Government use to indoctrinate their followers are very similar to those used by Hitler.

First of all, as in Nazi Germany, the Communists were made the main enemy and the attack on all the remaining democratic liberties of the people were carried out under the slogan of combating Communism. All critics of the government ranging from the mildest Liberal, to the most militant revolutionary, have been attacked and persecuted under the "Suppression of Communism Act".

Second, extreme nationalism has been used first to establish Afrikaner rule over the Whites of British extraction, using much of the Nazi technique, and the same cult of the "Volk".

Third, the Nationalists constantly preach the superiority of all White people over the inferior non-White people, just as the Nazis preached the superiority of the Nordic or Aryan race over the "Semitic Race" and, it hardly needs to be said, over what they considered to be the still more inferior people, the lowest of the low, the Negroes.

One of the main concerns of the Nationalists is naturally to indoctrinate the young. The following gives some idea of the Nationalist conceptions of the type of education suitable for non-Whites:[20]

> "The White South African's duty to the native is to Christianise him and help him on culturally. Native education should be based on the principles of trusteeship, non-equality and segregation; its aim should be to inculcate the White man's view of life, especially that of the Boer nation, which is the senior trustee. The mother tongue should be the basis of native education . . . . Native education should not be financed at the expense of Whites."

Since then the ideas expressed have been put into practice so effectively that non-Whites are now unable in their own country to obtain education to fit them for anything other than the most menial tasks.

In spite of all the efforts of the Nationalists to spread racialist doctrines, precisely one sphere in which they have felt a permanent weakness is in that of ideas:

> "Ask for guns, armoured cars, baton charges, detention without trial, hangings, lashes, and all the other trappings of physical intimidation and they can prove their advantages. But ask them for an idea which can stand the moral scrutiny of the world, and their deficiencies are immediately exposed. Apartheid is built on too much suffering to be allowed to survive."[21]

Conclusion

How then do we now answer the question with which we started, "What is the nature of racial prejudice, and why is it so destructive?" Looking at three examples, the Negroes in the U.S.A., Anti-Semitism in Germany and Apartheid in South Africa, there is one main feature in common.

The biological difference between different racial groups, unimportant and minor as they are, are seized on by the capitalist class and its apologists in order to make it easier for them to maintain power and for the few to exploit the many. Playing on the fears and insecurity of the people, they evoke and develop racial prejudice and racialist dogmas to divide the people, create a scapegoat for the people's anger, and in so doing further their main aim—profit.

The capitalist class use many different means of carrying out their strategy of "Divide and Rule". Sometimes they use religious differences, boundary disputes, differences in cultural level and in traditions and customs, the stirring up of tribalism and other methods. Racialism, however, is one of the main and most frequent methods. Behind all these efforts to divide the people, expressed sometimes very directly and sometimes indirectly, is the main origin, the essential cause of racialism, the profit motive and the determination of the privileged class to maintain its system of society.

That is why the struggle against racialism is an essential part of the struggle against imperialism. It is necessary for all anti-imperialists to expose the false racial doctrines and to show the common interest of those who suffer from imperialism.

The fight against racialism can be carried on by means of education, by legal measures against discrimination and racialist propaganda and by constant vigilance and action to expose and struggle against examples of prejudice and discrimination.

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[19] *The Rise of the South African Reich*, Brian Bunting, Penguin African Library, 4s. 6d.; p. 54.

[20] An extract from a programme for education issued by Institute of Christian National Education. South Africa, 1948.

[21] Brian Bunting, *Op. cit.*, p. 224.

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Many victories can be won in this struggle but to remove the causes of racialism, imperialism itself must be destroyed and replaced by a socialist system in which exploitation, inequality of opportunity and insecurity will be ended. Even then the rooting out of all racialist ideas will not be a simple or an easy process but may take many generations. However, once the imperialist basis of racialism has been removed the task of eradicating it completely can be tackled with the utmost confidence. (*The final article in this series on "Racialism in Britain" will be published in a subsequent issue.*)

Monopoly Capital

A Critical Review of a Contemporary Study

R. Bellamy

THE development of capitalism since World War II has been the subject of continuous discussion by Marxists especially since the middle nineteen-fifties. Its performance in different countries has been sufficiently diverse for one to welcome especially a contribution from the most powerful centre of monopoly capitalism, the United States.[1] This is even more so when the authors of the book under review are both well known in academic and progressive circles alike. Professor Baran of Stanford University (who died in 1964) is best known for his work *The Political Economy of Growth* published in 1957.[2]

Paul Sweezy is known to academic readers for his pre-war work in Roosevelt's Temporary National Committee on the Concentration of Economic Power (whose present scarcity and non-republication by the United States Government since 1941 is a tribute to the evidence it provided of the nature of monopoly capital), for articles on the theory of pricing under conditions of oligopoly, and for his *Theory of Capitalist Development: Principles of Marxian Political Economy*, 1942. Of more recent years they have both been associated with the "independent socialist magazine", *Monthly Review*, of which Sweezy is joint editor, and which has published their work, including the present book.

I. THE SCOPE OF THE BOOK

> "The purpose of this book is to begin the process of systematically analysing monopoly capitalism on the basis of the most developed monopoly capitalist society . . . Our essay sketch makes no pretence to comprehensiveness. It is organised round and attains its essential unity from one central theme: the generation and absorption of the surplus under conditions of monopoly capitalism. We believe that this is the most useful and enlightening way to analyse the purely economic functioning of the system. But, no less important, we also believe that the modes of utilisation of surplus constitute the indispensable mechanism linking the economic foundation of society with what Marxists call its political, cultural and ideological superstructure."

The argument of the book's successive chapters follow logically from this purpose. First, it examines the "giant corporation" as the generator of surplus. A system consisting of rival giant corporations will cause also "the tendency of the surplus to rise", both absolutely and relatively to the social product. Unless the surplus which would emerge from any level of economic activity can be absorbed on terms which guarantee continuance of that level, then clearly that level will not be maintained, and the actual surplus will be less than the potential surplus that could be produced by society's fully employed resources. Therefore, the mode of "absorption of surplus" is a central economic question.

The remaining economic chapters discuss in turn the actual modes of absorption, and consider whether they can expand the rate of absorption as fast as the rate at which the surplus grows. If they cannot, monopoly capitalism will be faced with a tendency towards chronic stagnation at some level of production below the full employment potential.

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[1] Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital: An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order*, Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1966.

[2] Its appearance was warmly welcomed by the present writer in a *Labour Monthly* review in the autumn of that year: it was reviewed in a hostile, and cavalier spirit by *The Economist*, and otherwise substantially ignored in academic circles.

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Four modes of absorption are examined: first, the two which are common to all epochs of capitalism, and overwhelmingly predominant in the pre-monopoly period, namely capitalists' consumption and investment; second, the expansion of the sales effort and expenditures, consequent on the replacement of price by non-price competition under monopoly; third, the expansion of civilian government, and fourth, the growth of expenditures associated with imperialism and militarism. The path which could be deduced from this model of the economy is then compared with actual events in a chapter entitled "On the History of Monopoly Capitalism". Chapter 9, "Monopoly Capitalism and Race Relations" is included not only for its political importance in the United States context, but for the following reason also:

> "Our almost total neglect of a subject which occupies a central place in Marx's study of capitalism . . . does not mean, however, that this book is not concerned with the class struggle. For a number of reasons, some of which are analysed in Chapter 7 (on Militarism and Imperialism—R.B.), the class struggle in our time has been thoroughly internationalised. The revolutionary initiative against capitalism, which in Marx's day belonged to the proletariat in the advanced countries, has passed into the hands of the impoverished masses in the underdeveloped countries who are struggling to free themselves from imperialist domination and exploitation. It is the exigencies of this international class struggle which, as we attempt to show, play an increasingly decisive part in determining the utilisation of the surplus and therewith the whole character of the society in the leading imperialist power. We deal in Chapter 9 with the racial problem in the US which is one of the critical links between the international class struggle and the internal balance of forces within the United States."

Chapter 10, entitled "The Quality of Monopoly Capitalist Society" is a moving and powerfully written indictment of the material social conditions which capitalism produces for the people (bad housing, poverty, anarchic transport) and of the ideological superstructure represented by a class oriented educational system and an increasingly degenerate morality. (Here one misses any sense of the struggle against these evils and any sense that the end product is the result not only of the will of monopoly capital, but of a conflict of wills.)

II. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Since a large part of the book consists of economic analysis, and since both authors are able economists, it is to their conceptions in this field that we turn first.

The giant corporation has three features:

(1) "Control rests in the hands of management, that is to say, the board of directors plus the chief executive officers. Outside interests are often (but not always) represented on the board to facilitate the harmonisation of the interests and policies of the corporation with those of customers, suppliers, bankers, etc.; but the real power is held by the insiders, those who devote full time to the corporation and whose interests and careers are tied to its fortunes."

(2) "Management is a self-perpetuating group. Responsibility to the body of stockholders is for all practical purposes a dead letter. Each generation of managers recruits its successors, trains, grooms, and promotes them according to its own standards and values. The corporate career recognises two characteristic forms of advance: rising from lower to higher positions within a given company, and moving from a smaller company to a larger one."

(3) "Each corporation aims at and normally achieves financial independence through the internal generation of funds which remain at the disposal of the management. The corporation may still, as a matter of policy, borrow from, or through, financial institutions, but it is not normally forced to do so, and hence is able to avoid the kind of financial control which was so common in the world of Big Business fifty years ago."

Further, the typical United States large corporation has, since World War II, become increasingly oriented overseas, a position which before World War II was confined to a few corporations such as Standard Oil.

The purpose of the first and third points is not, as might seem at first sight, to make concessions to the theory of the "managerial revolution"—against which, indeed, Sweezy has in the past conducted an able polemic. They stress, not that great wealth or large stockholdings are unimportant, but that they operate through the placing of the scions of wealth in key "insider" positions. No evidence is, however, produced which would counter one's suspicion that the multiple director is not exactly unknown on the American scene; clearly he cannot "devote full time" attention to any one company. The second point is also unfortunately put in a way which seems to play into the hands of the managerial revolution theory. Though a careful reader of what follows will perhaps realise that there is a difference between the "body of stockholders" (whose numerical majority, the small stockholders, plays no independent part in company control) and the "body of stock" (whose majority—or decisive minority—in the hands of the largest stockholders —often the institutional stockholders, the insurance

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companies, pension funds and investment trusts) plays the decisive role.

These criticisms are minor ones, within a general agreement. The same cannot be said for their third point, which I strongly contest, as I do the important implications which flow from it. The book's "giant corporation" appears to be overwhelmingly a *non-financial* corporation, and one could read this part of the book without being aware of what we are told later, that the sector of finance, insurance and real estate accounted for 10.2 per cent of the Gross National Product in 1960.

Finance Capital

What is really at stake here is the concept of finance capital in its Leninist sense. If the authors were right in their evidence and emphasis, we should have to revise, and rightly, the earlier sections of *Imperialism*. We should also have to ask and answer the historical question, how did the banks and other financial institutions, for which a key role in the formation of U.S. monopoly capital at the end of the 19th century is admitted, accept their expulsion from the industrial scene, and what are their activities now that give them such a share of gross national products? In fairness, one must give the explanation which Sweezy himself was already giving in 1942, and which has appeared in their joint work in the *Essays in Honour of Michal Kalecki* in 1964, and reappears in the present volume. In 1942 Sweezy argued

> "today the entire banking system could be seized in the USA without causing more than a temporary ripple in the ranks of big capital".[3]

In the 1964 joint article mentioned above the critique of the concept of finance capital (itself sometimes vulgarised into "the dominance of the banks over industry—which is *not* the Leninist concept") was again advanced as follows:

> "the second phase (i.e. the monopoly phase—R.B.), beginning around 1880, or so, is characterised by the dominance of finance capital. Concentration and centralisation of capital lead to the spread of the corporate form, of stock markets, etc. In this context, bankers (in the United States investment bankers) seize the initiative, promote mergers and monopolies over which they establish their dominance, and thus become the leading echelon of the capitalist class." (It should be noted that the concept of finance capital advanced here is not that quoted with approval by Sweezy two decades earlier from Lenin: "the concentration of production, the monopolies arising therefrom, the merging or concrescence of banks with industry: this is the history of the rise of finance capital and the content of this concept"—R.B.) "This theory, together with Lenin's very important Law of Uneven Development, worked very well in explaining the main lines of development of the world economy before the First World War. Since then, however, certain changes in the characteristics of the ruling classes have taken place which need to be taken into account in the development of the theory. The big monopolist corporations, which were formed and in their early years controlled by the bankers, proved to be enormously profitable and in due course, through paying off their debts and ploughing back their earnings, achieved financial independence . . ."

In the present work this point is stated dogmatically as a self-evident truth. The only evidence for it (appearing elsewhere in the book in connection with a different point) is from Lintner[4]. Lintner in point of fact states that the 28 companies he examined are not a representative sample (they might therefore have been used with more caution by Baran and Sweezy). Of the 28, 4 paid out more than 70 per cent of their earnings in dividends, and only 12 paid less than 40 per cent. Only 6 used no external financing, and 5 used external financing for more than 40 per cent of the total uses of funds. It is surprising that no reference is made to the enormous volume of evidence on this point in Raymond Goldsmith's studies for the NBER, or to Lintner's own conclusions elsewhere[5] that:

> "This stability in the relative reliance on internal and external financing through the middle of the century is indeed what we find when we look at the data on the sources and uses of funds of corporations. This finding is directly contrary to the broad Berle and Means thesis, to Berle's more recent position, and to the *widespread impression, not only among the lay public, but among economists and professionals.*" (Emphasis added—R.B.)

The same author also writes:

> "Among large manufacturing concerns there is similar evidence that the ratio of outside liabilities to the total amount of inside financing has been secularly stable, with a long term upward drift if anything." (op. cit. p. 179.)

There is much more evidence of a detailed kind which I have not space to quote here. But some

[3] True, he was countering an incorrect view of Hilferding, and some polemic-exaggeration may be pardonable. But in countering it he was already advancing a theory of the diminished role of the banking system based upon the substitution of internal financing for external financing of the large corporation.

[4] Papers and Proceedings of the American Economic Association May 1956.

[5] His article in Mason E. S.: *The Corporation in Modern Society*. Harvard 1959, pp. 166 ff.

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conclusions drawn from that evidence are important. The most recent study[6] is worth quoting as it gives a picture for the United States very reminiscent of my own, derived from researches on Britain.

> "The development of the direct placement of corporate debt instruments with financial intermediaries, mainly life insurance companies. occurred along with other developments, all of which contributed to a significant redistribution of the holdings of corporate bonds . . . At the opening of the post war decade individual holdings of corporate bonds had fallen to less than 40 per cent of the total outstanding. Life insurance companies had already become the most important single type of investor in corporate bonds and held more bonds than individuals. The trend towards concentration of bonds in the portfolios of financial intermediaries continued well into the post war decade. Indeed, it received no set back until 1955 when the percentage held by these institutions fell from the peak of the previous year of 82 per cent to 79 per cent. *This situation resulted in the non-financial corporations having to look to the financial intermediaries for the bulk of their long-term debt financing*". "A small but perceptible decline in the proportion of common stock outstanding held by individuals is evident. The most note-worthy development is the very rapid growth of and marked shift in favour of equities by the non-insurance pension funds. Indeed, in the latter part of the period, common stock acquisitions by these funds amounted to about one quarter of the net issues of common stocks coming into the market". "*For all non-financial corporations total debt as a proportion of total assets has grown slowly from 29 per cent in 1945 to 41 per cent in 1955*". (Emphasis added—R.B.)

The reason, I think, why many people have too easily accepted the thesis of internal accumulation (without, however, considering its implications for the relevance of finance capital) has been that the data they used were drawn from periods when the level of investment was low, or, for special and temporary reasons, corporation liquidity was high. Dobrovolsky had noted already in 1951 (*Corporate Income Retention* 1915-43) that:

> "Unless future patterns of behaviour change radically, it would appear that corporations will continue to draw heavily on the capital market when their expansion is rapid, but that internal financing will be adequate when net investment is slack."

However, in modern capitalist countries where hire purchase financing is an important source of absorption of consumer goods output, and in a world where the ability to sell heavy capital equipment increasingly depends upon the willingness of banks and governments to finance the necessary credit, there are other grounds for rejecting a premature demise of the links between banking and industrial capital. Yet even these grounds apart, I write this in a week where ICI has come to the market for the second time in two years for sums which jointly amount to about one-ninth of its total assets; nor is the ICI by any means the first of the largest companies to do so. Nor does the relationship between banking and industry described in the two chapters on Germany in Mr. Shonfield's *Modern Capitalism* reveal any decrease: if anything the contrary.

Relationship Between Firms

A second, primarily economic question, is that of the stability in the relationship between firms. The analysis of price-formation in monopolistic or oligopolistic markets is not easy. Today, when the issue of the relation between wages-costs and prices plays so vital a part in the ideological struggle, it is imperative to slip neither into a view that wages-costs have no effects on prices, nor into the much more common (indeed in academic circles almost universal) position that under monopoly price-competition has altogether disappeared and wages-costs, through the addition of some constant percentage gross margin, determine prices.

The new feature of monopoly, as compared with competitive, capitalism is the change in market structures. Undoubtedly, this has the effect of making prices more rigid in face of changes in data (movements in costs, whether one's own or those of rivals, and movements in demand, both of which are today likely to be affected by rapid changes in technique). But the change from price-competition to non-price competition is often presented (in my opinion) in too absolute a manner, and the possibility of temporary reversals (indeed of a dialectical relation through time) is underestimated. Of course, the trend which results from this process is to increase, over the whole world, the degree of monopoly. But the law of uneven development, one of the most important laws of capitalism, and especially characteristic of our times of rapid technical change, tends to produce sharp discontinuous changes in the position of industries, countries, and firms. Hence the increase in the degree of monopoly, which is not in doubt, is not to be thought of so much as a process of slow, steady, quantitative increase, *uniform* for all firms, sectors and countries—which would tend to preserve the stability of relationships once established. One should think also, and perhaps rather, of sharp qualitative changes which tend to disrupt the stability of established positions. To be sure, the giants concerned have great staying power in

[6] Shapiro and Mendelson: *A Decade of Corporate Investment*, 1946-55, N.Y. 1960, p. 333.

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the struggle and great reserves with which to wage it (though it is salutary to remember that in the great merger movement in Britain in the last decade some sizeable firms have been absorbed, and giants of the size of Courtaulds have not been immune from attack).

The casualties which result from price war may no doubt be heavy, and there may be no certainty that anyone will win. It is quite correct of Baran and Sweezy therefore to assert the principle of "co-respective behaviour" shown by one oligopolist towards a rival. But the costs and casualties from reduced sales and output where production processes are rigid, and more and more costs are in the nature of overheads, are also very high. Nor is there evidence that the fear of casualties, if there is a reasonable chance (or, what matters, there is *believed to be* a reasonable chance) of victory, has ever stopped rivals in this economic field, more than in military fields. Therefore, as against the "live and let live" image, which the authors propose, following Scitovsky's concept of the "desire for the quiet life and secure rather than maximum profits", I would prefer that of a pair of wary tigers, evenly matched, but each waiting for a momentary lapse or weakness on the part of his rival, in order to strike.

It follows that price and non-price competition are not mutually exclusive, and that price competition, while replaced in the normal order of events for considerable periods by non-price competition, is by no means excluded. If war is the continuation of policy by other means, so is price competition the continuation of non-price competition by other means.

I would hazard an estimate that behind the general political approach of Baran and Sweezy (of which a little evidence has already been quoted, but which will be dealt with at greater length in a moment) is an over-estimation of the stability of intercapitalist relations, and therefore of the unity of the world capitalist front. The policy of the world communist movement—and the foreign policy of the USSR from its inception—has always been (and with tremendous success) based upon the existence of objective antagonisms between the major imperialist powers, and the possibility therefore of preventing a common front against socialism. If, on the other hand, these divisions are believed to be small or diminishing, one's estimate of the likelihood of a united attack increases and one's foreign policy is accordingly different. Of course, I am not saying that the existence of objective antagonisms is enough; one has to take account of them and use them. But at least the first condition for this is to believe that they exist and are not diminishing. While in the book the Law of Uneven Development of Capitalism is mentioned and even stressed in principle, it plays no large part in the analysis of intercapitalist relations.

Role of the State

Last among the narrower range of questions, but already moving outside it, is the role of the state. After asserting that "under monopoly capitalism the function of the state is to serve the interests of monopoly capital", the authors reject "the now accepted view in the Communist world that the advanced capitalist countries have long since . . . entered [the stage] of state monopoly capitalism".

Now, it is, of course, true that state intervention was much more vital to the development of most capitalist countries in the 19th century (especially, Germany, Japan, and the USA itself) than is shown in the conventional model of *laissez faire*. Certainly, too, it can be agreed that any terminology which permits confusion about the class character of the state is to be avoided. But we cannot, on the other hand, agree with Baran and Sweezy when they "find the evidence of a qualitative change [in the role of the state—R.B.] in recent decades unconvincing". Their own chapters on the role of civilian government and of militarism and imperialism provide ample evidence to the contrary.

What, in my opinion, is wrong here is that they fail to see the two-sided character of state control and ownership. The one aspect (which they do see) is the increased function of the state in the interests of monopoly capital. The aspect which they do not see is that the need for chronically increased interference by the superstructure of society in the base, of the need to have state interference on a large scale as a chronic element in economic life, is a sign of the very profundity of capitalism's contradictions, that is, of its weakness.

Once the running of economic life in the interests of monopoly capital is achieved not via some "impersonal economic laws with which it is dangerous to tamper", but is via overt direction by a very personal and political body which can be identified and which is ostensibly responsible to the "nation", then the fight of the people, led by the working class, to defend their economic (as well as their wider) aims, takes on a directly political, character. It is in the struggle to make state intervention work on their behalf that people will in fact discover its existing class bias, and thus the crucial necessity for its transformation into an instrument of the popular will. In this discussion the authors are handicapped by their apparent unawareness of the prolonged discussions which have taken place in the European Communist Parties (e.g. in *World Marxist Review*,

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in the work of the Gramsci Institute of the Italian Communist Party, and, most recently in the symposia organised by the French Communist Party) and of their implementation in their practice.

III. ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

This is explicitly a book about political economy. Its overall conceptions of the main relationships within economic life, and the main relationships between economics and politics, are therefore crucial to an overall estimate of it.

The first point to consider is whether the framework of approach, "the generation and absorption of surplus", and the "new law of monopoly capitalism" based on it, are correct. Take the law first.

In place of Marx's law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall (which they argue is a law appropriate to competitive conditions), they suggest a "law of the tendency of the surplus to rise". This is not the place to discuss whether Marx's law suffers from the limitations suggested, or indeed whether it plays the role in the analysis of capitalist development which they ascribe to it. I would tentatively suggest that the law of surplus value is the nearest approximation to a general law of motion of capitalism, expressing the content of both its main and its secondary production relations; at the same time it is hazardous to attempt to exhaust the rich contradictions in a single law. Two points, however, are immediately puzzling in the Baran-Sweezy law. First, it is clear that a law about surplus value and a law about the rate of profit are not strictly comparable at all, for the latter expresses surplus as a proportion of capital, while the former says nothing about capital. Thus a rising rate of surplus is compatible indifferently with a rising, constant, or falling rate of profit, according to the assumptions made about the size of the capital against which surplus is measured. Second, there is no doubt that there was a tendency of the surplus to rise also under competitive capitalism.

True, the new mechanism for redistribution of surplus between capitals (which replaces the *average* rate of profit of the competitive epoch by a *differential* rate in the monopoly epoch), namely the existence of monopoly prices, was not present in competitive capitalism; but the other mechanism, namely the compulsion to innovate and thereby to raise the productivity of social labour, was present. A law, therefore, which is based on a tendency common to all capitalism's history cannot delineate the specifically new features of monopoly. Whether one should try, as Stalin did, to compress all the manifold, and the new, contradictions of monopoly capitalism into the framework of a single law, is a matter for further discussion. What is quite certain, however, is that one must adopt a framework of discussion which encourages analysis of *all* the contradictions of monopoly capitalism at its various stages of development, and then decides which are dominant at a particular stage.

Too Narrow a Framework

This brings me to the second point. Is not the framework provided by the generation and absorption of surplus, with, in practice, its undertone of emphasis on the problem of chronic stagnation, or on the breakdown of capitalism from purely economic contradictions,[7] too narrow and restrictive a framework? Even if this were a book about economic crises (which in some ways it is), would it not be better to treat economic crises within a framework of the growth of disproportions in the economy, and include within that framework, as a special, most important (but by no means only) case, the disproportion between productive capacity and consuming power? But in the wider context of discussion about long-term capitalist development I have doubts about the fruitfulness of a model from which one concludes:

> "According to our model, the growth of monopoly generates a strong tendency for the surplus to rise without at the same time providing an adequate mechanism of surplus absorption . . . If the depressive effects of growing monopoly had operated unchecked, the United States economy would have entered a period of stagnation long before the end of the 19th century and it is unlikely that capitalism could have survived into the second half of the twentieth century . . . What then were the powerful external stimuli which offset these depressive effects?" (In a footnote the authors explain what they mean by "external" as follows: "These stimuli are only external to that aspect of reality which we have sought to encompass in our theoretical model. They remain external from the point of view of the present analysis because we are not attempting to explain their causes but only to take account of their effects.")

But is not this to forget the authors' own characterisation of Marxian social science ("Its focus is on the social order as a whole") or their own text from Hegel: "The truth is the whole"? An analysis which would take wars and their aftermath as external (in the sense that their causes cannot be found in the contradictions of monopoly capitalism) would be markedly inferior to that used (with its faults) by the international communist movement

[7] I have never understood what was meant by the "breakdown" of capitalism, as distinct from its overthrow by some human agency. To ask "what agency?" is of course to raise the difference between utopian and scientific socialism.

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in the 1930s, where the growth of fascism and war were shown as arising from the struggle for the re-division of the world, sharpened by the world economic crisis. Fortunately, the authors are better than their model, and do in fact see the emergence of U.S. militarism from, among other causes, the desire of U.S. imperialism to dominate the world and destroy socialism.

Here, the individual chapters and the central thesis do not seem entirely integrated. What in any event is absent is the clearly delineated stages of an historical process; first a stage in which a world carved up by imperialism can only, on the basis of the law of uneven development, be re-divided by inter-imperialist struggle; second, the supplementary analysis of the later communist movement that, once socialism has emerged from the contradictions of the earlier stage, the further development of capitalism takes place in the presence of a new and ever more decisive antagonist, the socialist world.

No analysis of modern monopoly capitalism which omits, or minimises, this contradiction and all its many-sided economic and political effects, both direct and indirect, can expect to make a scientific analysis which will stand up to the test of practice.

Role of the Working Class

The third point concerns their estimate of the role of the working class, whether as an exploited class in the developed and underdeveloped capitalist countries, or as the ruling class (along with other classes) in the socialist world.

In the opening of the book, the authors explained that their approach "as we have used it, has resulted in an almost total neglect of a subject which occupies a central place in Marx's study of capitalism: the labour process".

They agree that such a study of "the consequences which the particular kinds of technological change characteristic of the monopoly epoch have had for the nature of the work, the composition (and differentiation) of the working class, the psychology of workers, the forms of working class struggle and so on . . . are all obviously important subjects which would have to be dealt with in any comprehensive study of monopoly capitalism".

But in a book whose title, and whose aim suggest that it is intended to be comprehensive, they give as a reason for rejecting the study of the labour process, in which the working class is formed and shaped, an argument we have already quoted once:

> "Our neglect of the labour process does not mean however that this book is not concerned with the class struggle. For a number of reasons the class struggle in our time has been thoroughly internationalised. *The revolutionary initiative against capitalism, which in Marx's day belonged to the proletariat in the advanced countries, has passed into the hands of the impoverished masses in the underdeveloped countries* who are struggling to free themselves from imperialist domination and exploitation." (Emphasis added—R.B.)

This is the central thesis of a position whose general content will be sufficiently familiar not to require further elaboration. Other aspects of it are presented in other parts of the book. Revolutionary war is seen as the highest form of resistance, and any victories since World War II not won in this way (e.g. the building of the German Democratic Republic as a socialist country) are not even mentioned. The three-continents theory also appears. On page 4 we are told of the "undiminished relevance of Marxism in its Leninist—and Maoist—forms". As has been usual in the present writer's own experience in an under-developed country during the last three years, those who stress the Maoist version never refer to such concrete analysis of the leading role of the working class which dominates such a work as *Classes in the Chinese Countryside*. In this book, too, despite their alleged "power and relevance", specific analyses of underdeveloped countries by Mao are absent from text and index alike.

In his preface to the 1962 edition of *The Political Economy of Growth*, Baran had already begun to move towards an analysis of the world balance of forces similar to that here, with special emphasis on the supposedly negative role of the USSR as an "appeaser" of imperialism, and as taking "too narrow a 'nationalist' view of the needs and requirements of the entire socialist camp and focusing too much attention on the rapid betterment of the economic situation of the Soviet people". The caution represented by the quotation marks around "appeasement" and "nationalist" has gone from the present work. It is true that in its final chapter—"The Irrational System", there is a passing reference to the socialist world's role:

> "As the world revolution spreads and as the socialist countries show by their example that it is possible to use man's mastery over the forces of nature to build a rational society satisfying the human needs of human beings, more and more Americans are bound to question the necessity of what they now take for granted."

Is this, in a book of nearly 400 pages, really an adequate estimate of the part which the socialist countries (and, if only because it is the most powerful, the USSR) are playing?

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IV CONCLUSIONS

I have read this book several times in the last three months; this review is not therefore based upon a hasty or careless reading. The authors hope "that it will be of use to the students of Indonesia and all other countries of the underdeveloped world in achieving a fuller and clearer comprehension of a reality whose importance they already recognise". After returning from three years work in Ghana (up to and including the counter-revolutionary coup), during which I continually recommended the first edition of Baran's work to generations of students, I cannot, personally on balance, share their hope. I have seen too many intellectuals who shared the "leftist" point of view of this book, who ignored the internal working-class forces, who treated the Soviet Union as a negligible or even as a hostile influence, who romanticised violence, who talked idly about the revolutionary peasantry, without even the beginnings of a class analysis, and in consequence were prepared to take on the whole bourgeoisie, internal and foreign, play an irresponsible and divisive role among the progressive forces. Unfortunately, my impression of the ideological development of the editorial policy of *Monthly Review* is not helped by the special number of July/August 1966[8], which reflects, along with a complete omission of any reference to the young Marxist wing of the Convention People's Party and the Marxist journal *The Spark*, a position similar to the one I have criticised.

At a first reading, of the book under review, it seemed that perhaps one should commend the subtlety, vigour and penetration with which many individual points (including many which we have had no space to mention here) of analysis of monopoly capital were presented, welcome the deeply-felt and passionately-expressed hatred which the authors share for its dehumanising and degrading effects, and then treat the general line on the working class, on the USSR, and on the strategy of advance, as unfortunate aberrations, best forgotten.

If ideas matter such a luxury is not possible. For we are concerned not only with how monopoly capitalism works as a going system. We are concerned even more with how it generates, through its objective development, the human forces which organise, unify, and lead themselves to its overthrow. Any estimate which minimises the role of the socialist countries and the working class introduces confusion, not clarity. It deflects attention not only from practical steps, but also from the creative theoretical tasks in which Marxists should engage. Among them I would mention only two—to show how the working class is being changed by the processes of the scientific technical revolution and what are its responses to it, and for the developing countries, to move from vague classless terms like "the impoverished masses" to a scientific analysis of the developing class structures of those countries.

In short, there is in this book an antagonism between many partial, individual analyses, which are good and valuable, and the overall picture which I believe substantially wrong, often dangerously wrong. The experiences of the world progressive movement—the bitter experiences of Indonesia, and the bitter fruits of division within the international communist movement—have not been lost in recent months on a large number of Marxists. For the sake of their past contribution to the development of Marxist thought, and for the future, it is to be hoped that they are not lost on the remaining author of this book.

[8] *Ghana—The End of an Illusion.*

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Marxism and Criticism

Contribution to a Discussion

Michael Long

We print below one of the opening contributions, made by Michael Long, Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge, at a Discussion Conference on "Marxism and Criticism in the Arts, Literature and Drama". The Conference was organised by the Marx Memorial Library on June 5th, 1966.

A Marxist Critic

IT is perhaps possible that a western Marxist not so very long ago, and, in the socialist world a Marxist even today would have found the problem of the Marxist and criticism not a very taxing one. Under the kind of headings that have been agreed as suitable bases for our discussion today he could have pointed out how the critic assists the artist, or the student, or the member of the public in their several businesses of producing good art, of learning how to appreciate good art and use it for the purposes of formal education, and of generally distinguishing in their everyday lives between what is beneficial and what is not in matters of culture. He would perhaps, in surveying the history of this kind of activity, have noted how good criticism was frequently an appendage of other types of creative work—philosophy with Aristotle, Plato, Hegel and Nietzsche, or the writing of poetry as with Horace, Sidney, Ben Jonson, or the working out of general social ideas as with many of our modern writers on artistic matters. He could observe that criticism, of and for itself, raised to the status of a fully-fledged independent discipline—indeed claimed as being the key to all disciplines of the mind—was a new phenomenon of twentieth-century society.

He could then review the ideas of the various bourgeois critics who had performed distinguished exercises in the field, and pointed out their qualities and failings, grouping the failings, quite correctly, under some such tendency as "the inability to see the connection between economics and aesthetics", "the inability to show the way forward via the efficacy of left-wing political activity", "the remoteness from the people", etc. He would say, and I assent, that most bourgeois critics, like most bourgeois artists were OK. BUT . . . and the reason they were not completely OK was because (again I can see the truth of it) they do not have an overall understanding of the inter-relatedness of this, that and the other. The Marxist critic was thus covertly presented, though seldom on exhibition, as the man who saw all that the bourgeois intellectual saw, but also saw how, until the proletarian revolution was well under way . . . the last fine careless rapture would not be realisable. The failure to see this, on the part of the wretched bourgeois, constituted his decadence, his irresponsibility, the harm he was doing to art, and the reason why he would be swept away.

Then again, such a Marxist would deny the existence of universally valid criticism, and point out how conditions in the socialist countries were not the same as in the West so that while it was only natural that the bourgeois idealist should live in comfort in Hampstead, writing critical articles on vorticism and the objectivists, it was also necessary that, if they did not meet the needs of the peasants, artists in socialist countries should be deprived of their livelihood, their career and, possibly, their lives by the wise and cautious Communist critic. Such a theory could easily be justified by showing how bourgeois liberty was nothing but an illusion anyway, and how bourgeois critics, selfish, irresponsible and fastidious men that they were, were only concerned with their own rather narrow and unrepresentative tastes and not with the broad cultural needs of the toiling masses.

With this last observation, to the three-quarters truth of which I readily assent, he would have closed his case—perhaps with a final plea that the bourgeois critic should repent and become a fellow-traveller if not an actual member of the party.

Let me make it quite clear that with most of the general gist of what this Marxist would have been saying I would have been in agreement. Most of the fundamental standpoints of most of this position are, for the most part, true. Mostly. The terrible thing is that, for so long now, these three-quarter truths have passed for unchallengable verities, so that two things have happened. In the socialist countries, where those who were raising three-quarters into a whole were, and are, in positions of great power, we know the criminal and disgraceful results. And in the West, not only have generation

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upon generation of intellectuals become disaffected with the doctrine offered—before or after accepting it—but also, perhaps more importantly for our present purposes since we are now in a position to do something about it, into this remaining quarter which we left so vacuous—that most important of all the quarters in so far as it is where the really new creative ideas enter the corpus of existing ideas gathered from a wide variety of sources—into this remaining quarter—were injected, untouched by any influence of Marxism, key formative ideas of twentieth-century criticism. They were injected by men deeply committed to a whole cultural renaissance of their own which, in my opinion, should be our own as well; and because, as they say, we reported assent on the point that was involved, they held what we have to contribute in a contempt which, let us admit it, was, in this particular sphere, almost entirely justified. Thus, it is that we must now, I think, look back at this body of ideas and dig out the points of creative contact.

I therefore want to use my time at this meeting in an attempt to outline some of the finest of critical ideas injected into this vacant quarter by a number of bourgeois artists of the twentieth century. The ideas come from many sources. Some are very clearly worked out, some tossed off at random. None of them came from Marxists, or from people in the least friendly to Marxism. Yet, between them, these ideas seem to me to add up to the beginnings of a materialist aesthetic with which we, as Marxists, should strike contact. We must enter into that neglected quarter and see what roots we can find and how we can help them to grow.

Ernest Fenollosa

Some of the key formative ideas of twentieth century English literary criticism are, I think, recognisably of a group. They are heavily committed to the break-up of one kind of culture and the re-establishment of another and they are therefore socially assertive in a conscious way. Those artists, critics and teachers who most conspicuously contribute to the intellectual programme of the great literary renaissance through which we have now been living for more than half a century, can for a moment, for all the differences between them, be seen to be directing us towards a common review of ideas with the largest cultural implications. *They imply and uphold a whole way of life*, towards which we must have an attitude; and into whatever remote reaches of ancient, foreign and obscure literature they may direct us in the pursuit of their ideas we are, I think, offered permanent sustenance in the belief that they are in fact engaged upon immediate problems for our own contemporary culture.

Ezra Pound, in his preparatory remarks to Ernest Fenollosa's essay "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry"—a classic of modern literary criticism—puts it with convenient adroitness:

> "In his search through unknown art Fenollosa, coming upon unknown motives and principles unrecognised in the west, was already led into many modes of thought since fruitful in 'new' western painting and poetry . . . he cannot be looked upon as a mere searcher after exotics . . . to him the exotic was always a means of fructification. He looked to an American renaissance."

In the nature of the fructification, and of the renaissance to which, Pound asserts, Fenollosa looked, we shall find many starting points for the discussion of these central ideas of which I have talked.

Fenollosa's essay records his "joy" and "delight" at obtaining through his study of Chinese poetry, certain insights into the nature of linguistic communication and poetry afforded by a type of medium —the Chinese character—freer from the unnatural clutter of grammatical logic than is, habitually, our own language. I do not know whether his thesis is true of Chinese language—modern Chinese scholars apparently doubt it and assert that the basic pictorial qualities of the characters are now obscured so that native writers are availed of no greater force, simplicity or gesture in language than are writers who employ Latin alphabets with a phonetic basis. No matter. The concept of language as ideogrammic and gestural—a concept useful for Pound and Fenollosa as Westerners who "looked to an American renaissance"—is what matters. And what is called for by Fenollosa, and I think actually exhibited in the poetry of Pound and others, is language exploited as "a vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature" . . . "shorthand pictures of actions or processes". Truth, says Fenollosa, is "the transference of power" and our language, if it is to get at this truthful rendering of processes, must not deal in what he calls "stunned" categories of time, for "A true norm, an isolated thing, does not exist in nature", but must be employed so that "motion leaks everywhere, like electricity from an exposed wire".

This kind of language will be "close to nature"; it will actually carry the sense of change, the power of change, the distribution and redistribution of force, the sense of process in time, which modern science, he says, contrary to the static conception of "feudal logic" and of "medieval grammar" has taught us to see in the natural world. "Science", he says, "fought till she got at the things" . . . "she has discovered how functions cohere in things" and our poetic language must train itself to follow that lead so that, just as a piece of nature, like a man, is not "a dead thing" but is "a bundle of functions", so, in poetic language thus cleansed of the unnatural

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tyranny of grammatical logic, we may go "flashing through regions where the intellect can only grope", we may "obtain for a moment the inner heat of thought, a heat which melts down the parts of speech to recast them at will" because we have managed "to keep words as flexible as possible, as full of the sap of nature". Language will therefore be "metaphoric" in its structure, not logical—metaphor being "the use of material images to suggest immaterial relations", which it does in a dynamic manner opposed to the aspiration towards a "pure copula" or "the dead white plaster of the copula" which fixes static brick-like words together in a lifeless manner. (Pound, editing Fenollosa, rightly appends a footnote at this point to indicate the closeness of this conception of metaphor to that of Aristotle who said that skill in metaphor was the mark of poetic genius for it indicated a skill in the swift perception of relations between things. He might, perhaps with even greater relevance, have noted that this is also the kind of definition we need for the early seventeenth century idea of "wit" as it applies to the poets of that period, whose poetic styles were so profoundly influenced by the new conception of "things" and of the relations between their developing as a consequence of the scientific revolution proceeding apace in Elizabethan and Jacobean London.)

Now the implications of these ideas put forward by Fenollosa, and so enthusiastically adopted by Pound, seem to me very great indeed. Pound, indeed, went so far as to claim that "we have here not a bare philological discussion, but a study of the fundamentals of all aesthetics". What Fenollosa and Pound are indicating is the way in which language conveys what is actually in the world in a manner not divorced from its processes and therefore laden with an immediate, forceful and truthful representation of reality. The least implication of it for poetry will be a new conception of the relation between poetry and reality, and therefore there will be demanded of us a new set of criteria whereby we judge the merits of works of literary culture, or at least of poems, as critics and readers. We will have new means at our disposal for asking the relevant questions of a poem: not so much "is what this poet saying true or acceptable to us, and if so is he saying it well?" but rather "Does this poem make an adequate and lively enactment of a process in such a way that our lives will henceforth be enhanced because our perceptions of that process have been cleansed, clarified and sharpened?"

Marxism Today and T. S. Eliot

I think that the first question, which I regard as trivial, has often been that which Marxists have asked of the work of modern poets—like Pound himself, or Eliot—whose opinions are unpalatable. When Eliot died, for example, *Marxism Today* carried a brief obituary notice in its editorial section. It was a far better notice than those endless columns of guff and nonsense which were spread over the pages of *The Observer*, *The Sunday Times*, etc. The writer had my full admiration when, in the midst of all this nonsence, he produced this excellent sense:

> "Phrases from these poems, once absorbed, haunt the mind and re-echo through the consciousness, letting us see things we had not seen before, clarifying and liberating not only our own use of language but the way we live. 'I have measured out my life with coffee spoons', 'Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians', 'I will show you fear in a handful of dust '."
>
> *Marxism Today*, March 1965.

That is a first-rate piece of criticism (though I would have had him say the whole poems, not just "phrases from them"). The writer has not only put but also found an answer to the second of my questions and not the first, the trivial, one. He stuck to it, too, avoiding the convenient form/content dichotomy which is built into the trivial question and which provides a simple escape route for the philistine dogmatist:

> "We cannot be content to make an artificial distinction between form and content and pronounce T. S. Eliot an accomplished literary technician. It is not the technique that gives the early poetry its value. It is the expression of real and tough insights into actual aspects of twentieth-century life in strong and vital terms. That is there and . . . nothing can quite take it away."

Excellent again; but the trouble was that the critique now cried out for a new criterion for judgment to be applied which would enable the Marxist critic to arrive at a final assessment capable of tying up the two contradictory strands observed in Eliot—the man who can "liberate" "the way we live" and Eliot the "anti-humanist", "anti-democratic", "illiberal" "élitist". The notice could not provide it; and, indeed, when it came to "*The Four Quartets*" the other (trivial) question was asked and answered: "The keynote of the *Four Quartets* is a sense of mystical submission". That could not be produced as a response to this incomparably managed, controlled masterpiece of modern poetry, this strenuous exercise in contemplative stamina; "submission" could not be suggested to be Eliot's process of mental activity in this work unless the critic, whose intelligent penetration has been so convincingly used, had disabled himself by the employment of a seriously defective critical doctrine: a critical doctrine which sets a premium on static denotive language which works, by way of logical statement,

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towards simple propositions the truth or falsehood of which one can then debate. Eliot's poem makes no such proposition: and, indeed, if Eliot were to make one it would, as likely as not, be one of the stupid kind that Fenollosa enjoys himself in mocking: "A ring-tailed baboon is not a constitutional assembly". This, which Fenollosa mocks, is a proposition about as sound as that with which Eliot presented us when he implicitly stated that "the great modern man of letters is a Royalist, Traditionalist and Anglo-Catholic". He might as well have claimed himself to be a ring-tailed baboon, for all the difference it would have made to the *Four Quartets*. Likewise, the fact that another poet, Yeats, would have been quite capable, denotively speaking, of calling himself a ring-tailed baboon, should not deter the Marxist from his enjoyment of the *Meditations in Time of Civil War*.

The points that I have been making should now be getting clearer. Fenollosa asserts that creative language enables us to apprehend life by containing within itself, within the words of which it is made, actual enactments of the processes of nature as they stand revealed by science. As such it is distinct from the "feudal logic" of "stunned" things linked by inert, plaster "copulas" and attempting, in the teeth of nature, to arrive at static and propositional truths. The only static and propositional "truth" to which the *Four Quartets* leads us is that Christian contemplation leads to achieved excellence, which, with the writer of the obituary notice, I hold to be fallacious. Equally, the propositional statement of Yeats's *Meditations* would seem to me something like "fighting a national liberation struggle is less civilised than bird-watching" which is equal nonsense. But I believe that if we applied Fenollosa's criteria to these two great works we should be able to see their mastery for what it is. Take the closing lines of Eliot's poem, for example:

> "When the tongues of flame are in-folded
> Into the crowned knot of fire
> And the fire and the rose are one."

Here, using Fenollosa's categories, we can follow the way in which there are enormous "transferences of power" going on between the five key images of "tongues", "flame", "crown", "knot", and "rose", so that, beneath the organising pressure of the poet's application of his mind, the energies of those words are all released in fluidity to form the new category—the wholeness of a mind masterfully aware. For this supreme achievement we have done what Fenollosa said poetic language could do: in the manner of "scientific thought", "following as closely as may be the actual and entangled lines of forces as they pulse through things". For, "Thought deals with no bloodless concepts but watches things move under its microscope". Then, and this is the really crucial cultural point to be got from the poems as from Fenollosa who provides the definition: "the beauty and freedom of the observed world furnish a model and life is pregnant with art". When we get to this it looks as though Pound was right in saying that we would arrive through these ideas at more than "a bare philological discussion", but would be concerned with "fructification" and "an American renaissance". The writer of Eliot's obituary notice was correct when he said that what we found in that poetry which so excels by Fenollosa's criteria was not just "an accomplished literary technician" but work which could liberate "the way we live". And I was saying something quite deliberately above when, in setting out on this brief discussion of some of the key ideas of modern criticism I claimed that "they imply and uphold a whole way of life".

Ernst Fischer

What is this Renaissance? This way of life? This way we live? And what has it to do with the making of a viable Marxist aesthetic?

Fenollosa's adroit and patient concern with the purity of the medium in which art is produced is not an isolated thing: it has strong links with a number of other concepts which I shall briefly outline in a moment. But it is first salutary to notice that such concern, if we employ some of what have become standard definitions of viewpoint in Marxist literary critical circles, would have been damned as "formalist" and as "anti-humanist". It's not just the old Stalinists who regard such matters as formalist—(the usage of the term which Ilychov exhibits would certainly necessitate the inclusion of Fenollosa and Pound within those areas of bourgeois endeavour to be pronounced black, but some such idea would seem to me to lie behind the very common Marxist dismissal of Eliot and Pound as "rootless cosmopolitans").

But such a definition and standpoint is still implicit in the writing of a conscious anti-Stalinist like Ernst Fischer. Sometimes, as in his speculations on the structure of crystals, he comes near to an energetic conception of form: but when he pronounces form "conservative" and content "revolutionary", so that the classic case of a worthwhile work of art becomes easily identified with that work in which *restrictive* form is burst asunder we are back with the old inhibiting dichotomy. And it is very significant that it is tackling Cézanne, through whom we can get back to the main line of ideas about art that I am tracing, that Fischer's erroneous criteria, his persistent asking of the trivial one of those two questions I posed above, lead him into the most revealing absurdity. "Already with Impres-

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sionism" observes Fischer, "the human being was dissolved into light and colour and treated as just another natural phenomenon in no way different from any other. 'Man should not be present' said Cézanne. More and more man dwindles away . . ." and so he goes on until the cubist revolution in the presentation of reality, together with certain parallel ideas of depersonalisation in modern poetry, gets, in all seriousness, bound up with that kind of dehumanisation to be observed in *Mickey Spillane*.

This is grotesque: surely here we must be at a crux. And we are. For if we consider the actual import of what Fischer has dismissed: man being "treated as just another natural phenomenon in no way different from any other" we shall get back to the "whole way of life towards which these great modern artistic ideas are leading us and in relation to which so many Marxist conceptions of art appear as grotesque negatives. Two remarks of D. H. Lawrence, one on Cézanne, and one from an essay on the Novel, should point the way.

D. H. Lawrence

"In Cézanne", says Lawrence, "modern French art made its first step back to real substance, if we may call it so. Van Gogh's earth was still subjective earth, himself projected into the earth. But Cézanne's apples are a real attempt to let the apple exist in its own separate entity. . . . Cézanne's great effort was, as it were, to shove the apple away from him, and let it live of itself. It seems a small thing to do: yet it is the first real sign that man has made for several thousands of years that he is willing to admit that matter *actually* exists. . . . It seems little, and he died embittered. But it is the first step that counts, and Cézanne's apple is a great deal, more than Plato's idea."

I can scarcely think of any brief passage in modern criticism of the arts more pertinent, more essential for our culture, than that. The formal endeavour, which "seems little", *to stop imposing a subjective will upon nature* so that we may apprehend the laws of its own actual existence—"let it live of itself"—is here so clearly seen as implicitly establishing a vast definition—as vast as Plato's, only better—of how we stand in relation to the world outside us. We remove from our environment the obfuscation, the mystification wrought upon it by the intrusion between us and it of idealistic notions of our relation to it; we reveal its own processes; we apprehend, with Fenollosa, "how functions cohere in things"; we see the world clean, substantial and material; and we thereby conceive it in a manner appropriate to modern materialists, not to ancient Platonic idealists. "The way we live" as the *Marxism Today* reviewer of Eliot knew, is "liberated" by such a change of stance. Art and criticism perform their most distinguished function of bringing man into a satisfying creative harmony with the world outside himself because he has seen it so clearly, and understood it.

Lawrence's second remark is perhaps now gratuitous. It underlines this same point very emphatically, only the form of idealist obfuscation here rejected is now Christian, not Platonic:

> "I don't believe in any dazzling revelation, or in any supreme Word. 'The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of the Lord shall stand for ever.' That's the kind of stuff we've drugged ourselves with. As a matter of fact, the grass withereth, but comes up all the greener for that reason, after the rains. The flower fadeth, and therefore the bud opens. But the Word of the Lord, being man-uttered and a mere vibration on the ether, becomes staler and staler, more and more boring, till at last we turn a deaf ear and it ceases to exist, far more finally than any withered grass. It is grass that renews its youth like the eagle, not any Word."

Lawrence again, though in this essay his tendency to over-write his ideas in a histrionic fashion obscures the clean clarity of the central idea, which perhaps the contemplation of the immaculate Cézanne had encouraged in the first essay, Lawrence again points to the same "way of life", whereby the cleansing of the medium, the removal (*pace* Fischer) of a haze of man-uttered dogmas which get between us and the world because, like Fenollosa's "feudal logic" and "mediaeval grammar", they veil its energies and processes with a web of inertia, leaves the actual material and energetically charged environment of man clean to his apprehension. Thus, we return to Fenollosa's never-bettered definition of that achieved excellence, open to us now, in the establishment, by means of art in the great Aristotelian manner, of a satisfying assessment of our relation to the world outside us. "Science fought till she got at the things". Art follows the example. We take its message into our "whole way of life", into "the way we live", and we stand no longer alienated from life outside us:

"The beauty and freedom of the observed world furnish a model, and life is pregnant with art."

The Cleansed Medium

This, I think, offers a definition of *civilisation*, a materialist definition, superior to Plato's or that of Christianity actually worked out by many modern artists and critics, with very little assistance from Marxism—indeed frequently with its active contempt. It is high time that we took stock, and expunged our past follies.

I am quite sure around this central formal concern with the cleansing of the medium for the purpose of making the basic instruments of art more capable

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of containing the actual, truthfully depicted, material and substantial energies of the world we will find gathered, like spokes on a hub, all the great creative insights of modern criticism. The great aim, the great cultural turning point, which gets rid of the obfuscations and mystifications of alienated idealism, and which therefore should be deeply sympathetic to Marxism instead of arousing its childish anger, is the cleansing of the media of communication and expression, so that falsehood and sentimentality, all kinds of idealism, guff and flapdoodle, should be purged from the consciousness, and, in making a correct assessment of the world outside him, man can make a correct assessment of himself. "A whole way of life", deeply sympathetic to the aims and purposes of Marxism has been struggled for and given definition by our modern artists and critics; and we have, there to be dug out of their works a more momentously important set of cultural ideas than any that have ever existed, save some of those formulations of Aristotle which performed a similar service to the culture of the Greeks, and some of those of the Renaissance when, likewise, a new standpoint for man *vis-à-vis* the material world was worked out in the teeth of the obfuscations and mystifications of feudal conceptions of man and nature. It is to our shame that we have paid so little heed to so great a change going on in the world around us, that we have contributed so little to it, and that we have so frequently attacked it with such stupid hostility.

The "bourgeois" poets and critics have frequently returned to this "hub" of our culture, this "disintoxication" as Leavis called it when dealing with Yeats, this "awakening out of drugs" as he said, picking up the same metaphor as Lawrence used to describe "The Word of the Lord". It is there in the great American poet William Carlos Williams, whose phrase "a gesture to be clean" and whose famous and often repeated maxim "no ideas but in things" help us to link the marvellous firm material clarity of his poetic language to this demystification of nature that we have been discussing. When he describes a flower:

> "The perfections are sharpened
> The flower spreads its coloured petals
> wide in the sun"

or "the woody sepals standing back under
the stress to hold it there, innate
a flower within a flower"

we are presented with precisely that supple cleanliness of language, that authenticity to nature, which as Denis Donoghue has pointed out, is part of a whole way of living and attitude to life, with which, I think, Marxism should have no quarrel.

Ezra Pound

It is there again in Pound, who recognised Williams's noble function as a "barrier" to the "penetration" in America of "pale" and "denatured" ideas—alien and inhuman ones in short and Pound warns the poet of the necessity for staying close to material life, in terms very obviously related to those I have been discussing:

"Don't use such an expression as 'dim lands of peace'." It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realising that the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol.

"Go in fear of abstractions."

He clearly saw the connection between this formal advice and the quality of life involved in the form: "I mean it will not try to seem forcible by rhetorical din, and luxurious riot. We will have fewer painted adjectives impeding the shock and stroke of it. At least for myself, I want it so, austere, direct, free from emotional slither." And its great social consequence is there when Pound (very well aware of the inter-relatedness of this, that and the other) places this establishment of criteria for life and for a truthful representation of reality in art firmly in the human and social contexts it demands.

It appears to me quite tenable that the function of literature as a generated praiseworthy force is precisely that it does incite humanity to continue living; that it eases the mind of strain, and feeds it, I mean definitely as *nutrition of impulse*.

This idea may worry lovers of order. Just as good literature does often worry them. They regard it as dangerous, chaotic, subversive.

"And", he goes on "this function is *not* the coercing or emotionally persuading, or bullying or suppressing people into the acceptance of any one set or any six sets of opinions as opposed to any other one set or half-dozen sets of opinions.

"It has to do with the clarity and vigour of 'any and every' thought and opinion. It has to do with maintaining the very cleanliness of the tools, and the health of the very matter of thought itself."

I think that it should be apparent that we have too often been on the side of the lovers of order, to have taken due note of that central emphasis of Pound's: one which is in tune with the major artistic achievements of our culture in a way that Fischer, as a representative example, is not.

"The Complete Consort"

Pound's same emphasis on the concrete, the particular, and on what is not and cannot be *an abstraction* is there also in the best of the criticism of Eliot and Leavis; and in Eliot's theory of the "objective correlative" we have a closely related idea to

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Pound's notion of the "adequate symbol", just as his theory of "depersonalisation" in the creative process records his closeness to the central purpose: that of removing from the materials of art, from the instruments used and the objects depicted, all *imposed* human content, all that is not actually there to be got out from the words themselves and from nature itself, until, as he says in the impeccable *Quartets*:

> " every word is at home,
> Taking its place to support the others,
> The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
> An easy commerce of the old and the new,
> The common word exact without vulgarity,
> The formal word precise but not pedantic,
> The complete consort dancing together."

I know of no more centrally important group of ideas than these that I have tried briefly to outline, for the understanding of the main ways in which our culture has so remarkably extended the capacity of human creativity towards the representation of reality in art—at any rate in poetry and painting—in a manner adequate to twentieth-century needs. To these ideas, of the demystification of nature and its remaking *for* man so that it does, in Donald Davie's words "bulk up against us as other", and, associated with that, the positing of a whole way of life, a basic condition of which is such demystification: to these enormously important ideas Marxism has contributed very little. It is high time that we, who I repeat should above all be concerned with ideas such as these, endeavoured to get to grips with them, to think hard about precisely what kind of culture, what kind of consciousness, we are after, and to see whether it is not after all true that these "bourgeois decadents" might be the central guides to what we want.

> "Praise *this* world to the Angel," said Rilke,
> "not the untellable: you
> can't impress him with the splendour you've
> felt: in the cosmos
> Where he more feelingly feels you're only a
> novice. So show him
> some simple thing, refashioned by age after
> age,
> till it lives in our hands and eyes as a part of
> ourselves,
> TELL HIM *THINGS*: He'll stand more
> astonished: as you did
> beside the roper in Rome or the potter in
> Egypt,"

—and Rilke testified to the whole "way we live" thereby changed when he followed this great assertion with a simple record of the experience:

> "Superhumerous existence
> Wells up in my heart"

We are with the "whole way of life" indicated via Fenollosa at the start—when "The beauty and freedom of the observed world furnish a model, and life is pregnant with art".

John Berger

My remarks about Marxist criticism so far have been very derogatory; and in the central field that I have been discussing I am afraid that I would largely insist upon the derogatory estimation of its performance that I have given. There are modifications to be made, of course, though not, I think, qualitative ones. All I want now very briefly to mention is a few of the ideas of John Berger who, in his two books *Permanent Red* and *Success and Failure of Picasso* has, with greater clarity than I can command, gone a very long way along the road towards binding the great nexus of ideas that I have outlined with a Marxist understanding and expectation of art. Two things about this give me great cause for optimism: the fact that Berger has done it, which bodes well in itself; and the secondary fact that a very large number of Marxists and other Left-wingers have realised the great importance of what he has done and have responded to his work with great intelligence and enthusiasm. Let me just briefly outline what I think are the key points—where Marxism has been so creatively brought into contact with these ideas.

The central texts in Berger are, I think, the long passage on Picasso and the Cubists (pp. 47-90 of the Picasso book); together with the introduction to *Permanent Red* and the chapters in it on "20th Century Art"; "Juan Gris"; "Léger" (together with the *Marxism Today* articles); "Zadkine"; "Matisse"; and "Piero della Francesca".

Berger sees easily the close connection between Marxist ideas and those of the Cubists. He defines Cubism, in fact, as "the only example of dialectical materialism in painting". Cubist painters, from Cézanne, evolve a new representation of reality, which places man in a whole new position in the world—not just a formal change—and they brought the medium of paint into a condition close to that which Fenollosa advocated for the medium of language: "they created the possibility", says Berger, "of revealing processes instead of static states of being". And Berger, like Fenollosa, associates the business with the advances of science: "The emphasis of modern physics, and indeed all modern science, is on function and process. It denies the fixed state. It substitutes the notion of behaviour for the notion of substance"—and the Cubists too were "concerned with what was interjacent", just as Fenollosa said that modern poetry should be concerned with "the interactions of things". In doing so they were right at the hub

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of the new possibilities opened for the culture of our area: "They painted the good omens of the modern world".

I don't know whether Berger has read Fenollosa, or whether he would entirely agree with the line I have traced through the various modern critics with whom I linked him. But he is clearly aware that these ideas are not just private responses to paintings but are centrally significant ideas for the whole cultural revolution through which we are living and which we should be attempting to shape. He very interestingly associates that fine French poet Apollinaire, who championed the Cubists, with the ideas he is developing; and it would be an extremely valuable work to tackle Apollinaire's poetry from a Marxist standpoint. It exhibits, more consistently than that of Rilke whom I quoted, many of the key characteristics to which I have been drawing attention. But the point here is that Berger, not just producing local critiques of a random and eclectic selection of artists in whom he happens to be interested, has really succeeded in bringing Marxist criticism right to the centre of our cultural problems, and the effect is most profoundly invigorating. The "whole way of life", which I suggested these artists and critics "implied and upheld" becomes, I think, radically clearer when this Marxist understanding is brought to bear on it; and there can, it seems to me, be extracted from the rigorous consistency of Berger's work, many hints of the overall definition of that kind of modern consciousness which it is the business of the modern critic to assist the modern artist to generate. "Given a positive belief in the future", he says, "one can afford to select more critically from the past." Yet in one of his key selections, we come as near as we can to a very pregnant definition of the central aim involved. Piero della Francesca, says Berger, "paints what the world would be like if we could fully explain it, if we could be entirely at one with it. He is the supreme painter of *knowledge*. As acquired through the methods of science, or—and this makes more sense than seems likely—as acquired through happiness".

I think that that is also a very accurate description of something involved right at the centre of the modern ideas that these artists and critics have been developing. This is a very profound insight into what it is that makes "bare philological discussion" into something of deep humane importance, and that shows us how the way that Cézanne paints an apple, or Carlos Williams describes a flower, is of an importance so great that a Marxist who cannot understand it—or will not—is heavily disqualified from any claim to deep concern with modern cultural ideas and their relevance to his ideology. Berger, single-handed, has already paved the way. We should be fools if we did not make the necessary effort to walk in it.

Five Points

I would like in closing to draw five lessons from what I have been discussing here. They are political lessons, and I will state them very baldly. Given more time than I want to take up on this opening talk I could make the connections between them and the thoughts to which I have subscribed in greater detail and clarity. I hope that discussion will enable us to argue about them, and in doing so to bring those connections to greater clarity than I fear may now emerge.

1. I have joined Berger in attaching great importance to Cubism and to a number of parallel literary developments. This importance is so great as radically to determine any cultural policy worth bothering with. Yet they worked in lonely isolation, remote from the people. They were difficult, and still are. They were not interested in politics. They did not support this or that social cause. They were certainly "formalists" as that word has been habitually used by leading Marxists East and West. And yet, not only has their work come to satisfy the cultural demands of "fastidious bourgeois intellectuals" but also radically to determine the cultural needs and demands of the mass of the people. The buildings where we live and work, the paper and paint we put on our walls, the chairs in which we sit, the posters and adverts. we may or may not heed, the way we plan our towns—or want them to be planned: all the expectations we have come to make of our urban environments have been altered by the way in which this little group of difficult, remote, non-political formalists went about their work. I know of no greater object lesson in why we must acquiesce in the professional integrity and special skills of our artists than this. The first lesson, then, is that critics' attacks on artists for remoteness from immediate popular appeal, for lack of immediate comprehensibility, for concern with matters of form and style—not content, for failures to promote political causes—all these spring from untenable prejudices and should be treated accordingly.
2. Secondly, I have attached equal importance to some ideas and works of, for example, Pound, Eliot and Yeats. Their political opinions were obnoxious in an extreme way—between their racialism, anti-Semitism, fascism, royalism, glorification of the aristocracy, defeatist contempt for a national

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liberation struggle, hatred of the people, blood-worship, death-worship, intolerant religious conservatism. If we had censored away their works, for these very powerful reasons, we should have lost not only three of the finest poets who have ever written in our language, but also some of the greatest contributions to the understanding of past and present cultures our age has witnessed. My second lesson would therefore be that the development of consciousness, like the Almighty, moves in a mysterious way: that there is *no correlation whatsoever* of a kind which is accessible to the clumsy instruments of censorship, between progressive developments in human consciousness and the political opinions of those artists who most notably assist them; and that therefore the censorship of works of art for the political commitments implicit in them, or the political statements actually made in them, displays banal incomprehension of the nature of art, as well as being a basic violation of elementary principles of democracy and humanity. As such, it constitutes a basic violation of socialist principles.

3. I have argued throughout that certain modern artists have done certain valuable things and made certain valuable discoveries. They have not done this on the one hand and happened to be artists on the other. They have done it *because* they were artists—i.e. uniquely endowed with the unique skills and unique instruments of a distinct trade. The skills of different trades—of critic, artistic administrator, or politician could not have made those particular discoveries. There is no point, therefore, in pretending that by means of these other skills one can lay down laws about what other skills are to produce. It therefore follows that control of the arts by the state, like control of the steel industry or of transport—an attempt to programme what will be written or painted, is a farcical idea. My third point therefore is that any attempt on the part of politicians, except in their capacity as ordinary members of the public, to control what artists are going to do to our consciousness represents the assumption of unwarranted power for one human discipline—politics—to intervene on the ground of another where it is patently not at a premium. The claim, therefore, made by even the most celebrated Marxists, of the state's right to "intervene" in cultural matters to prevent "chaos"—"anarchy" is an unjustified claim. Artists create consciousness, not chaos; and if we equate the two we expose our ideology as being primitive—which Marxism is not.

Anarchy or Freedom

4. My fourth point arises out of this one about "chaos" and "anarchy", rather than from the main body of my talk. When Marxists have argued this line about anarchy—as Arnold Kettle did at the meeting on the Arts at the week of Marxist debate—they have usually defended the principle of intervention on the grounds that we can't have everyone doing whatever he likes. I don't think this is the business of the Marxist critic. "To do what one likes" in matters of cultural expression is an inviolable right. I do not think that any critical method has ever been discovered for predicting the social effect of a given work of art. I do not think, therefore, that alleged social effect of a work provides a sufficient criterion of quality—we have more accurate instruments of analysis. It follows that decisions about the quality of works of art, and therefore about the desirability of their publication, exhibition or performance, cannot be handed over to an analyst of social effects. The emphasis here on the right to do what one likes falls within a perfectly Marxist conception of freedom. Valuable cultural growth is not susceptible of accurate prediction: and a socialist society has an obligation of laying before its citizens a maximum number of opportunities for doing a maximum number of things that they like—including painting, writing and composing. That is real Marxist freedom: the presence of choice and opportunity, and not just the absence of compulsion.

5. My last lesson is a matter of political honesty and political tactics. In the socialist world—and events at the East German Party Conference remind us that it is today, not several years ago—powerfully prevailing "Marxist" theories of culture of the kind that I have criticised at present coerce artists, including some whose creative ideas are closely in contact with the nexus of ideas to which I have drawn attention. I think that it is a matter of the utmost urgency—for them, and for us—that this dispute should be settled as rapidly as possible in favour of those who argue for freedom, of the kind I have indicated above, as against those who argue for censorship, guidance, the prevention of chaos, tolerance of error, or some other such evil. I think, because of what I have said above, that a "whole way of life", a cultural renaissance

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of the most valuable kind, will be strangled if it is not so decided. I therefore think—and it is my closing point—that we should argue, publicly and vigorously, not in any mealy-mouthed fashion but as uncompromisingly as Berger, for example, has done, against those who are doing the strangling. And we should argue, in a similarly vociferous manner, against ideas of the strangling sort here. No service to the cultural development of anyone, or to any kind of happiness or well-being for humanity, can possibly be done by fighting shy of either of these tasks.

If we have the courage to work out these ideas to greater clarity, and stick to the principles I hope we will reach in discussion, I am very optimistic about the subject we have before us. I can well see Marxism becoming what it ought to be—and recognised as such: the most humane and civilised set of ideas known to man, the most free and the most creative, in the field of the arts and the criticism of the arts as everywhere else: the ideas which place man more happily in his environment than can any amount of idealistic clutter and mystification.

Discussion Contribution on:

The Dialogue between Christianity and Marxism

Alan Ecclestone

(Alan Ecclestone was a Lecturer in English at the University of Durham from 1927-30. He was ordained in 1931, Vicar of Frizington, Cumberland, 1936-43—a "depressed area" parish in the iron-ore mining district. From 1942 to date he has been Vicar of Darnell. He joined the Communist Party in March 1948.)

IT was desirable that *Marxism Today* should give ample opportunity to contributors on this subject. Such discussion in Great Britain was long overdue and the fact that a good deal of genuine dialogue had already gone on in Continental circles as John Lewis pointed out, and several important books been published, made the subject a timely one. Articles in *World Marxist Review*, already referred to in this discussion, were pointers in the same direction.

But I must confess to some misgivings, as I read on from month to month, that genuine dialogue is not being achieved. We are getting a series of statements from various points of view—Roman Catholic, Anglican, Evangelical Protestant, Platonist—but not enough wrestling with "neuralgic points", not even enough firm delineation of the points themselves. The loose ends of assertion are becoming so many and so various that the whole issue is in danger of being hopelessly confused.

The Nature of Religion

To begin with, a detailed re-examination of John Lewis's eight points made in the March issue of *Marxism Today* is called for. There are good reasons for questioning their adequacy as a sufficient basis for fruitful discussion of the subject. John Lewis recognises, for example, that religion is the "recognition of the sacred, either in the 'numinous' or the mystical or the sacramental on the one hand, or in the demands which the needs of our fellow-men present to our impulse to pity and fellowship on the other", but he does not seriously examine the nature and implications of this Hydra-headed phenomenon nor suggest that it is most important for Marxists to do so in concert with Christians. But surely it is precisely at this point—the discussion of the very nature of religion in general and Christianity in particular from sociological, historical, psychological and ethical angles—that we need far more work to be done. "Our impulse to fellowship"—what exactly does this mean? Will religion construed in these terms continue, develop new forms, contribute to world culture? I am not suggesting that John Lewis has not thought deeply about this question, but I think he has understated it. It calls for much more attention. H. J. Blackham's *Religion in Modern Society* opens up a field in which it is most desirable

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that Marxists should contribute fully. It is important that Christian theology should be subjected to philosophical criticism as well by Marxists as by any other school of thought, and there is not enough of it. Criticism is raging like a forest fire inside Christian circles in any case, and in so far as Christians and Marxists are concerned with the pursuit of truth, every critique that can be adduced is valuable and to be welcomed. Of course the demands for common action in progressive struggles should be in the forefront and a good deal of the sectarianism of the past should be excised; of course diversionary controversies should be avoided, but there is still considerable room for more knowledgeable, more detailed and more workmanlike Marxist criticism of religion. Even as exegesis on the occasional comments made by Marx on the subject there is much to be done.

Father Corbishley is right, so far, in saying that the "basis of dialogue is the true meeting of minds" —but this calls for some amplification. Professor John Macquarrie in his book *The Scope of Demythologising* has put it better:

> "To be fruitful, a dialogue needs contributions from both sides, and it must begin on the assumption that both sides have something to offer. The possibility of such a dialogue is destroyed if the theologian begins on the assumption that he has the monopoly of the truth; it is equally destroyed if the philosopher begins with the assumption that the theologian has nothing worthwhile to contribute. There is a possibility of a genuine conversation when theologians and philosophers find a zone of common interest upon which light can be thrown from both sides to the benefit of both disciplines."

It has been expressed in a somewhat different way by Roger Garaudy: "The future of man cannot be constructed in opposition to believers nor without them; the future of man cannot be constructed in opposition to communists nor without them," and he has gone further to write that the dialogue must take the form of "a search on both our parts to discover the fundamental components in that which gives meaning and value to our lives, whether in Christianity or in Marxism". (Quoted in the *Teilhard Review* from "De l'Anathème au Dialogue: un Marxiste s'adresse au Concile".) It is of interest that Garaudy sees in the work of Teilhard de Chardin two decisive affirmations—the autonomy of science and a radical moral optimism—which offer considerable ground for dialogue.

Common Ground

Now the definition or description of the "common interest" and its subsequent analysis in terms of the two disciplines must be much more rigorously specific than D. B. Runcorn permits himself to be in his article in the September number of *Marxism Today*, or we shall be lost in vague generalisations. He writes: "Anything He (God) gives man He expects him to share with other men and make it public and common." Good, but what exactly does this mean? Common ownership of the means of production and wealth produced, profit sharing, equal opportunities for education, health and leisure? Why not be specific and particular? "Theory and practice must go together." Good, but what in practice are we to commit ourselves to in this proclamation and pursuit of common sharing? What exactly do we set about doing? "God's revelation of himself is not to be found so much in nature or science but in history"—well, the value of the comparison is open to question, but the reference to history is made suspect when it is illustrated by the words "The saving acts of God in history—Jesus Christ born, died, buried, rose again the third day and appeared to his friends". Where exactly is the common ground to be found if out of the whole course of history—history in which we are all immediately involved in the day to day events of the world—the one item selected is one whose historicity is not even accepted wholly by all Christian theologians and one presented in terms loaded with theological implications?

Beginning with Man

I am not denying the reality of the historical Jesus but I am questioning the wisdom of trying to begin a discussion in the field of history on a matter where the only documents available do not supply the needed data and were written for wholly other purposes. We should be on difficult enough but more promising ground if we took up the subject of God and History in relation to, say, the Industrial Revolution. The Papal Encyclical "Pacem in Terris" was much more deliberately "earthed" in its recognition of the current world movement to new levels of social welfare and new assertions of national independence.

When, further, Mr. Runcorn asks "How do we look at the world and how do we change it?", he answers his question in theological terms but gives no clue whatever to an awareness of the need to restate these in non-theological terms. We may very well ask whether such a thing can be done. If it cannot, the possibility of dialogue would seem to be at an end, and this is in fact what frequently happens if sufficient trouble be not taken to reach the non-theologically equipped person. Of course it's difficult but the effort must be made. John Macquarrie has given a good example of the problem, describing how he was asked to talk, as a theologian, to a university leaders' conference including scientists.

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classicists, lawyers and medical men, and at the conclusion of his paper heard a physicist say: "The speaker was quite intelligible until he introduced the word 'God' into his talk. This word does not stand for anything within my range of concepts or experience, and so every sentence in which it was used was to me meaningless and the whole paper became unintelligible."

Macquarrie was grateful for the come-back and recognised that "in a secular age one may not assume that language about God affords a universally intelligible starting point for the interpretation of the Christian faith". He therefore addressed himself to the problem by beginning with Man. Man offers possibilities of common ground, God does not. My own experience over several years of talking to mixed audiences about Christianity and Communism confirms this point and emphasises the need to search for the common ground. Unless and until we do discover such ground, the talk about changing the world is likely to be left quite unrelated to political and social action and programmes and plans, and only leave the two sides more suspicious of each other than before. Why not try to say explicitly—if we are to have any discussion about change "this is what I think is called for—this is what I am prepared to do", for then we have solid ground for discussing the relevance, adequacy and value of the suggestion? It was exactly this that Marx insisted on, as Mr. Runcorn admits. I feel that many Marxists have a justifiable suspicion that the failure to be explicit in terms of political commitment creeps far too easily into these discussions.

John MacMurray

I have been a little perplexed to notice that in the contributions so far printed on this subject, little or no use has been made of the work of John MacMurray, the one outstanding British Christian philosopher who has addressed himself to the problem throughout a long life. His essay "Christianity and Communism" which concluded the volume "Christianity and the Social Revolution" (1935) was an early indication of his profound understanding of the questions at issue, of the common ground to be utilised, and indeed has hardly been improved on since. In later works like the "Clue to History" and his Gifford lectures "The Self as Agent" and "Persons in Relation" he has developed in great detail the implications of the subject. Quite recently in a small book describing his life-work he wrote that "the study of Communism was a *necessary prelude* to the understanding of Christianity", and "to the understanding of the reasons behind Marx's rejection of religion". I believe that full discussion of these statements would bring us to the heart of common ground, just as I believe that MacMurray's grasp of the dialectical movement in human affairs described in the "Clue to History" brings us face to face with the central problem of historical materialism.

MacMurray has chosen throughout to be quite explicit about the nature of religion. "Religion is about the community of persons", he says "and Liberty, Equality, Fraternity is an adequate definition of community—of the self-realisation of persons in relation . . .". He has as explicitly stated "that Marx's criticism of religion, which, he himself insists is the beginning of all social criticism, is almost grotesquely unscientific and *a priori*", pointing out that the religion of Marx's own Jewish ancestors was not in the least idealistic but materialist, showing no interest in any other world but entirely concerned with the right way to maintain a human community in this world. The chief point at issue is this nature of religion and MacMurray has persisted in defining the Judaic-Christian intention in material terms, in terms of community here and now. He has based his assertion throughout on the Hebrew refusal to permit a dualistic mode of thought to convert this down to earth religion into idealism. "The Hebrew form of thought rebels against the very idea of a distinction between the secular and the religious aspects of life. It demands the synthesis of action and reflection."

The Liberation of Man

The penetration of Christian consciousness by dualistic thought, perfectly expressed in Canon Adam Fox's article in the July issue of *Marxism Today* ("My view of the world about us is in one sentence that it is not the real world"), was in MacMurray's view, the primary, in terms of time and importance, perversion of the basic religious consciousness of the Christian Church. It opened the door for the distinction between material and spiritual, body and soul, this world and a Heaven hereafter—with which we have been plagued ever since and against which Marx so valiantly contended. But the battle is on and the allies in a common struggle are being drawn together. The battle in the Church is one episode of the battle in the world—for the liberation of man and for the speeding of his Long March with increased courage and profounder grasp of his job.

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